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THE
STORY OF OSWEGO



---BY---

RALPH M. FAUST

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THE STORY OF OSWEGO



WITH NOTES
ABOUT THE SEVERAL TOWNS IN THE COUNTY



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PUBLISHED
BY
RALPH M. FAUST
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FOREWORD

The purpose of this little volume is two-fold: first, to furnish much needed material for teachers and pupils in their study of local history; and second, to provide Oswego citizens and visitors with a ready reference about the community's past.

Oswego's story is an interesting and significant one. Important as a military outpost when the continent was taking form, its real significance lies in the part it played in the development of the west when lakes, rivers and canals provided the main arteries of communication. In every great movement socially and politically, Oswego made valuable contributions. Educationally the name of Oswego was honored both at home and abroad. Its past contributions will live and others will follow.

Appreciation is herewith expressed for the valued assistance rendered by Miss Helen C. Quirk in presenting these facts; and to Mr. Fred M. Barnes and Miss Ruth A. Raby for reading the manuscript for accuracy in fact and in form.

R. M. F.

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UNIT I

HOW THE INDIANS USED THE LAND NOW CALLED OSWEGO COUNTY

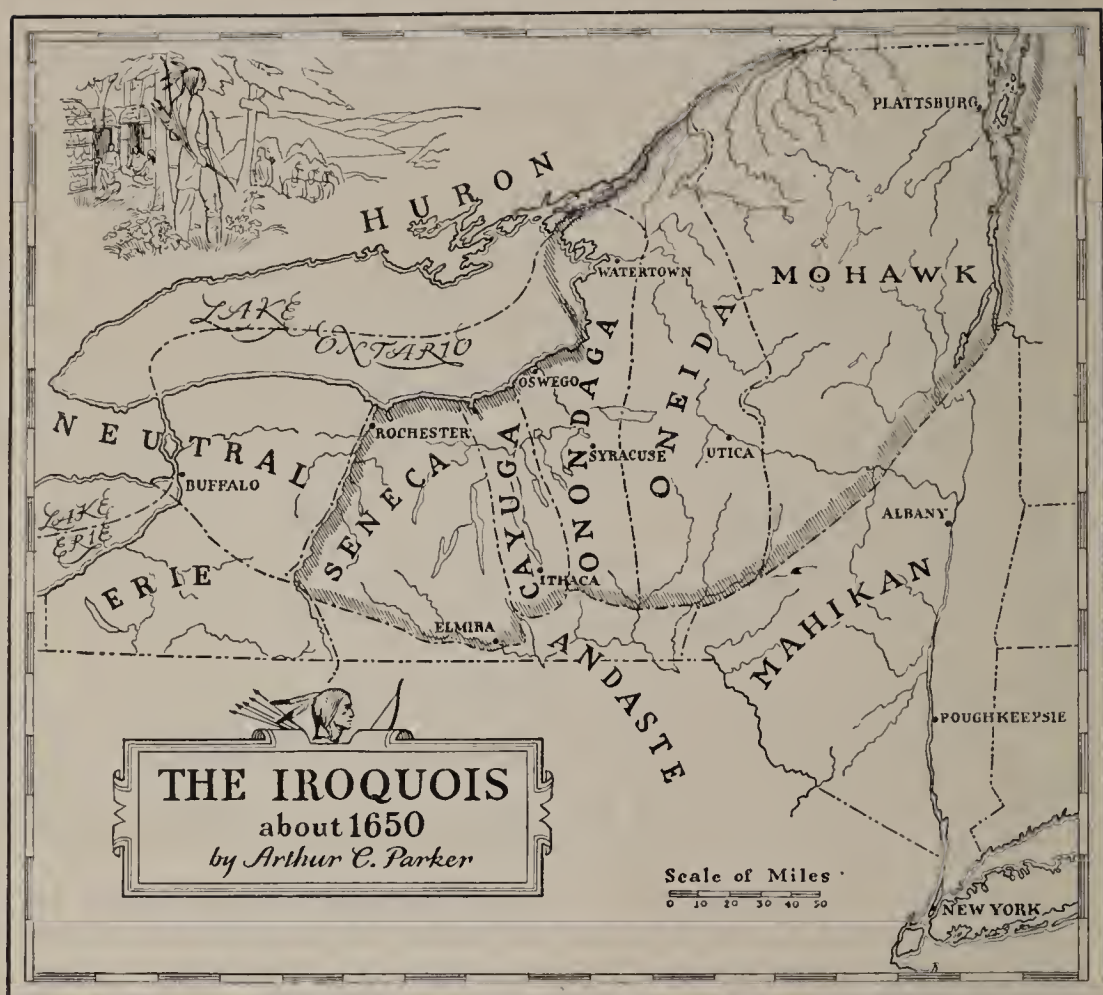
1. The Iroquois Owned All the Land in Oswego.

A long, long time before white men came here, the Indians owned all the land. They lived on our continent hundreds and hundreds of years. It is thought that the earliest red men came from the west and, following the Great Lakes, found their way into our Lake Ontario. It was the Indians who gave us the name of our lake and our city. They saw it was such a beautiful lake that they called it Skanyadario, which means "lake beautiful." The area around the mouth of the river they called Osh-we-geh, which means "pouring out place".

Many Indian tribes eventually selected the fine lands in New York for their homes. They learned to plant the fields. For many, many years they fished for sturgeon and salmon in our streams and hunted wolves, bears and deer in our forests. They liked their land here and wanted to protect it from their enemies.

In order to keep this section for themselves, several tribes in New York State formed a kind of union. This union was called the Iroquois Confederacy. It was composed of five Indian tribes who owned the lands in central New York. They were the Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk tribes. Do you recognize the names of some of our streets among them? Look on the map to see what land each controlled. You will see that most of Oswego county belonged to the Onondaga tribe.

Now the bitter enemy of these Iroquois people was their Algonquin cousins, and especially the Huron nation. Their lands lay across the lake and north of the St. Lawrence River. The main reason for the formation of the Confederacy was to protect themselves against these enemies. Ancient Indian stories told by old braves to their young sons tell us the story of this union. The



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great Indian hero Hiawatha was sent by the Great Spirit to clear the streams for their canoes, to teach the Indians how to raise corn and beans, and to encourage the Indians in obeying the laws of the Great Spirit. In banding together the five tribes, the wise Hiawatha said, "You five great and powerful nations must unite and have but one common interest, and no foe shall be able to disturb or subdue you." So the command of Hiawatha was carried out, and the Iroquois became feared by all other Indian tribes.

The legend reads that when Hiawatha first appeared on earth it was on Lake Ontario that he was seen. Then he is supposed to have proceeded across the lake to the Oswego River up which he travelled on his way to the Onondaga nation. While Hiawatha remained on earth, he was supposed to have removed the obstructions in the Oswego River at Oswego Falls, now called Fulton. Then the legends tell us that at Three Rivers he slew a serpent with one blow of his paddle, and that farther up the Oneida River he killed another. Thus we see that the Oswego River valley, our local area, was well known to the Indians even as far back as their old stories go.

2. Two Famous Indian Trails Crossed Oswego County.

At the time when the Iroquois held power over New York State, two of their important trails crossed this county. One of them came from the region around where Syracuse is now located. It followed the course of the Seneca River, passed Three Rivers Point, down the Oswego River and out on Lake Ontario toward the Thousand Islands, where it was an easy matter to cross into the land of the enemy. This trail was called the Onondaga war trail. In their journeys the Indians liked to travel mostly by water. In their light bark canoes they could travel swiftly and, if necessary, they could carry from one stream to another. These places were called "carries." One important carry on this trail was at Fulton where there was a waterfall.

The other trail, known as the Salmon River trail, crossed or rounded Oneida Lake and made connection with the Salmon River. From its mouth it also followed the shore of the lake to the land of the Hurons. These trails were used by both peoples in their frequent attacks on each other.

When you study your American history about the Iroquois Indians, you should remember that their home was in New York. You should recall that the proudest and strongest of these five tribes owned most of the land now in Oswego County. Today the descendants of these Indians still live in only a very small part of their once large possessions. It is known as the Onondaga reservation and is located just south of the city of Syracuse in the valley named after them.

UNIT II

HOW THE FIRST WHITE MEN CAME TO OSWEGO COUNTY

1. The French Settlers in Canada Aided the Hurons Against the Iroquois.

In October of the year 1615, five years before the Pilgrims landed in New England, white men first saw the soil of Oswego County. The white men were French. They wore swords and armour and carried strange-looking guns. One of their number, who seemed to be the leader, wore a great white plume in his steel hat. He was Samuel de Champlain, often called the Father of New France. New France, you know, was the early name given to Canada. The French had founded settlements there and had become good friends to the Huron Indians.

Now the Hurons wanted to attack a village of the Iroquois near here. When Champlain learned this he said, "I will help you, and my guns will frighten your enemies." So a party of Indians and some French soldiers started for the Iroquois village.

The war party crossed Lake Ontario in canoes. Near Henderson Harbor they hid them and followed the sandy beach until they arrived at the mouth of the Salmon River. Here they took the trail along the south side of the river which led them through what is now the village of Pulaski. Then they went overland, rounded the west end of Oneida Lake, and soon came upon the Iroquois village.

Champlain must have been surprised at the stronghold he found there. Around the huts was built a strong palisade which supported an inside ledge. On this ledge the defenders could stand and hurl stones and wing their arrows. When some of Champlain's Indians tried to set fire to the palisade, they found the Iroquois could open a trough through which water rushed to put out the flames. All the wild shouts, the swift arrows of the Hurons, and the thunder-guns of the French were of no avail. The Iroquois were brave, though they must have wondered at the strange white men and their weapons. Finally after a long fight

the Hurons became discouraged. They decided they could not capture their enemy even with the help of the white soldiers. So they gave up the attack and turned their faces homeward. With them they carried their wounded of whom Champlain was one.

While the battle itself did not take place within the limits of Oswego County (but just within Madison County), yet a large part of the trail the invaders followed led directly through our county. For this attack the Iroquois never forgave the French.

2. The Jesuits Were the First White Men to Discover the Site of Oswego City.



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JESUIT AND INDIAN

Champlain was unsuccessful in his attempt to extend the power of France against the Iroquois Indians. Then the "Black Gowns" or French missionaries sought to try. They were Jesuit fathers who had been sent out by the Catholic Church in France to convert the Indians. They were devout men ready to risk their lives in the service of their church and country. In doing this they endured extreme hardship, and many lost their lives.

The Jesuits were especially anxious to convert the Onondaga tribe whose main village was located near what is today the city of Syracuse. So one of their number, Father Simon LeMoyne, was sent to make a preliminary visit to the tribe. He went by way of the Salmon River trail, but when he was ready to return to Canada, the Indians guided him back over a shorter trail by way of the Oswego River. Tarrying at the mouth of the river before starting across the lake, the good padre asked the name of the place and his guides replied "Osh-we-geh." The name given the area by the French was Choueguen, (shway'-a-gen) which was probably as close as they could pronounce it.

Thus it was that the first white man came to our immediate vicinity. That was in the year 1654. For a long time Oswego was known as Choueguen. To Father LeMoyne must be given the credit of opening the important route to central New York by way of the Saint Lawrence, Lake Ontario, and the Oswego River, a route that became the principal highway to this part of the Iroquois country.

On his return to Canada Father LeMoyne presented an urgent request of the Indians for a mission on Onondaga Lake. The following year a brave band of French soldiers and missionaries established a fort among them. Today you can see a reproduction of this early French post on the lake shore between Liverpool and Syracuse. There the priests worked to convert the red men, and from there traders sent their furs back to Canada.

The settlement lasted only two years for the French came to suspect the true friendship of the Onondagas. In the spring of 1658 when the weather was still cold, the party quietly slipped

away in hastily constructed boats to Montreal. On their way they passed Oswego. From this period on the place became well known.

3. The French Held a Peace Conference with the Iroquois Near Selkirk.

Along the St. Lawrence River the French were quite successful in building settlements. The reason for their success was due to the valuable fur trade with the Indians. From New France the furs were sent across the ocean to old France. While the French founded their settlements along the St. Lawrence River, the Dutch were making settlements along the Hudson River. Thus New Amsterdam and Albany were founded. As a rule the Dutch were anxious to make friends with the Iroquois.

Then in 1664 the English took over the Dutch possessions, and New Amsterdam was named New York. Like the Dutch the English wanted to maintain friendly relations with the Indians. They could then secure some of the fur trade of which so much was going to the French, and then they thought the Iroquois would hinder the French settlements in lands the English wanted.

Before long the Iroquois had introduced English traders to the lands around the Great Lakes which, of course, made the French angry. More than that the Iroquois, at every chance, attacked the settlements along the St. Lawrence River in order to steal and secure Indian captives. Finally when some of the Iroquois began to interfere with the French fur trade of their enemies the western Indians, La Barre, the governor of Canada, decided that the Iroquois would have to be punished. And this of course meant war.

It was a strange army that La Barre gathered for this great war party. There were to be 1100 French soldiers and trappers, and 700 Indian allies. Up the St. Lawrence River they started in boats and canoes. LaBarre stopped at the French Fort Frontenac which was located across the lake where the city of Kingston now stands. Here many of the army became sick. Discouraged they

started across the lake toward Choueguen (Oswego). A change of plans landed them at the mouth of the Salmon River which the French called La Famine (Hungry Bay), and which we know today as Selkirk. Here more soldiers became ill, and now La Barre knew it was hopeless to attempt an attack on the Iroquois. So he decided to hold a peace conference instead. Messengers were sent to the Iroquois villages, and soon the Chiefs and wise men of the tribes came to La Famine.

The council began. La Barre was seated in a great armchair on either side of which stood the Jesuit interpreters. Straight in front of him sat the Chiefs of the Iroquois. Along each side stood a straight line of soldiers. La Barre addressed the Chiefs: "The King, my master, does not want you to rob French traders; he does not want you to introduce the English to the lakes; and he does not want you to fight his Indian allies. If you continue to do these things, I am ordered to declare war against you."

The chiefs listened silently to the governor. Then their representative, Big Throat, rose, walked gravely around the assembled group, and stopped in front of La Barre. He said: "Great Governor, I am not asleep, but you talk like a man in a dream. We are born free. We depend on neither the French nor the English. We will war upon whomsoever we like." This reply nearly caused the conference to break up. But the next day, however, an agreement was arranged. The Indians made some promises, and La Barre promised to smoke the pipe of peace at La Famine again the following year. He then hurried his small army back to Canada without having accomplished a thing.

Up to this time La Barre's army had been the largest gathering of white men in our county. That was in 1684. In 1696 Count Frontenac, another Governor of Canada, again attempted to punish the Iroquois and particularly the Onondaga tribe. Frontenac's army camped at Oswego before following the Oswego River to Onondaga Lake. These invasions into the Iroquois country did little harm to the Indians because they could easily take their families away. Eventually an alliance between the English and the Iroquois was formed.

UNIT III

HOW THE ENGLISH OBTAINED POSSESSION OF THE LAND
AROUND OSWEGO

1. The English Established Their First Trading Post on the Great Lakes at Oswego.

One grievance La Barre had against the Iroquois was that they had allowed English traders from the Hudson to come into the Great Lakes region. Not long after the conference the active English traders had pushed their way up the Mohawk River. Where the city of Rome now stands, a portage could be made into Wood Creek which emptied into Oneida Lake. It was then an easy matter to follow the current down to the "pouring out place at Choueguen (Oswego). Before they arrived, however the French coureurs de bois, or wood rangers, had known this spot well. Many times they must have stopped at the mouth of our river to await the arrival of the red men with their peltries.

It is difficult to say exactly when the first English speaking traders visited the site of Oswego. It seems quite reasonable, however, that scouts came about the year 1700. By 1715 trading between the English and the Indians had begun in earnest at Oswego, as the brave woodsmen meant to secure some of the valuable furs that were going entirely to the French.

By this time the French had a line of forts across Canada reaching from Frontenac on Lake Ontario to Quebec on the St. Lawrence river. Their next post was erected at Niagara in 1720, to further protect their great water route. Here they could meet the Indians coming from the western lakes and could thus secure a great share of the fur trade.

When the English traders learned the French had built a post at Niagara, they said, "We must build a post at Oswego to get our share of the Indian trade." So the first post at Oswego was constructed in 1722. It was built of wood and was used for trading purposes. Gradually a thriving trade developed as hun-

dreds of canoes laden with peltries passed down the lakes to Oswego. In the single year 1726 about three hundred English and Dutch traders were here bartering with the Indians. In exchange for the valuable beaver and other skins, the English gave blankets, clothing, cotton, iron pots, weapons, and unfortunately rum. One reason why the Indians liked to trade at Oswego was because they received more goods from the English in return for the furs than they received from the French.

The trading business became so important that a demand was made for a post which would afford better protection. Finally the English governor, Burnett, of New York colony, directed that a stone fort be built at Oswego. That was in 1727. It was not very large and in comparison with our ideas of a fort, it was only a stone house. It was located on the west side of the Oswego River directly on the bank of the lake. Today a stone marker points out the site of early Fort Oswego at West First and Van Buren Streets. This, then, marked the first settlement of the English on the shores of the Great Lakes. Within a short time it came to be regarded by the English as their most important post west of Albany.

2. The French Succeeded in Taking Oswego from the English.

The French were very much disturbed at what was taking place at Oswego. Their scouts reported the building of the fort. They told of the many trading cabins already constructed and of the increased trade with the Indians. Messengers were sent to the English officer in command at the fort with orders to leave the post and stop their trade with the Indians. To this the officer replied, "The English take orders only from their king." They quietly continued to stay on, although they felt that the French would some time send an army there. This fear and the knowledge that Oswego was the gateway to the English settlements on the Mohawk finally caused the English to strengthen the post.

In 1741 a great stone wall four feet thick and fifteen feet high was built around the stone house. On each of the four corners was placed a tower or block house. The French scouts

watched all this with growing concern for they felt the English had no right to this land. Moreover, they knew the Iroquois would ally themselves with the English if they thought them the stronger. Now the English felt that they had a right to this territory, and when two nations claim the same land, war usually results. This same rivalry brought on the French and Indian war with the English on one side and the French and their Indians on the other side. It began in America in 1755.

At once the English planned to strike at several different places. General Braddock was sent with young George Washington to the Ohio where the French and Indians turned them back. Great preparations were made at Oswego to control Lake Ontario by capturing Niagara and Fort Frontenac. Soldiers poured into Oswego. Carpenters came to build ships. Fortifications were strengthened. When all was ready it was too late in the fall for General Shirley to make his attacks. However, he ordered two more forts built here. One was Fort George which stood on the site of Castle School. The other was Fort Ontario which was placed on the east side of the river on the site of the present post.

Now the French had plans too. "Choueguen," they said, "is a thorn in our side and it must be destroyed." At first they were content to merely destroy the means of communication with Oswego by raiding the block houses that guarded the route to Oswego. Thus they destroyed Fort Bull which protected the carrying place at Rome. There were also block houses along the Wood Creek, at Three Rivers, and at Oswego Falls (Fulton). It was one of these French and Indian raiding bands that fell upon an English party at Battle Island. The party was returning in empty boats to Albany after having delivered supplies at Oswego when the French fell upon them. The English, however, bravely fought them off and pursued them through the swamps beyond Fulton.*

Finally in August 1756 the French determined to send an army against Oswego itself. The enterprise was a bold one but their general, Montcalm, laid his plans well. He gathered an

*For more details see pages 104-106.

army of 3000 French and Indians at Fort Frontenac and started across the lake. The advance was managed so skillfully that the English little realized what was taking place. With dawn on the 11th of August, the attack began on Fort Ontario. For three days the thunder of the guns echoed throughout the silent forests. At last fearing they could not hold the fort, the English, in the night, retired across the river to Fort Oswego. It was a simple matter then for Montcalm to erect his guns upon Fort Ontario and train them on Fort Oswego the next morning. Moreover, a party of Canadians and Indians forded the river and marched on Fort Oswego and Fort George from the south. During the savage fire from Montcalm, the English leader, Colonel Mercer, was killed. In a vain effort to hold out, the soldiers in Fort George were ordered into Fort Oswego. Then the French began a terrific drive on the sole remaining defense. Outside the old fortification the guns roared, and the blood curdling yells of the excited Indians increased the horror of the occasion. Inside the cries of the frightened women added to the signs of defeat that gradually became apparent. Feeling they could sacrifice no more lives, the English hoisted the white flag in surrender.

The glory of the victory was dimmed by the horrible scalping of many of the English by the Hurons after the surrender. Montcalm tried to prevent this but only after many were slain. About 1700 prisoners were taken with great quantities of stores, boats, and weapons. The French then burned the forts and the vessels. Amid the ashes of what was once Oswego was left a tall cross planted by a French priest which bore the words "By this sign they conquer," and along side it stood a pole bearing the arms of France.

Up to that time it was the greatest victory for the French, and their king ordered medals commemorating the event.* For the English it was a severe loss. However, it was not only the loss of the forts which disturbed them. The English anxiously asked, "What will the Iroquois do now? Will they side with the French because they think them the stronger, or will they remain our friends?" For the English this was an important

*See page 85.

matter. The answer might mean success or failure to the English cause in America.

3. The English Achieved Victory Over the French and Held a Great Peace Treaty with the Indians.

As two boys would play a game of checkers, so did the French and English play their game of war. They played to win a whole continent. Up to the time of the fall of Oswego, the New York Indians had been largely spectators of the game. It is true they were more friendly to the English, but they were not slow to realize that it would be well to go to the side of the winner. When Oswego was lost by the English, the Iroquois were now sure that they should no longer keep peace with their English brothers. Said the Indians, "If the French white father is stronger, then we shall join hands with him." The western tribes of the Iroquois were already going over to the French. The Onondaga tribe was much perplexed. Only the Mohawk tribe seemed to hold to the English.

The reason why the Mohawks stayed loyal was because of one man. It was to this man now that the English turned anxiously to keep the Iroquois friendly. His name was William Johnson. Johnson had married an Indian maiden and had built himself a great house on the Mohawk River near Johnstown. For a long time he had been a fur trader who learned the language of the red men and held them in high regard. The trade through Oswego was one of his chief interests before the forts had been destroyed. His understanding and fair treatment of the Indians made him their good friend, and the English used him as their Indian agent. As a leader of men the English king made him a knight after which he was known as Sir William Johnson. It was to Johnson now that the English looked to keep the Iroquois friendly. He immediately called a council of all the tribes to urge them to cling to the English. With great difficulty he finally succeeded in getting the Senecas, Cayugas, and Onondagas to remain neutral. Johnson's forceful eloquence impressed the Indians less than the loss of Oswego.

It was over two years before the lonely wilderness around Oswego was to vibrate again with the sounds of English soldiery as they continued their game of war. The fort was rebuilt and preparations were put under way to carry the battle into French territory. In August 1758 an army of 3000 English soldiers left Oswego to take Fort Frontenac. Following up this victory the next year, Sir William Johnson led another army of soldiers and Indians out of Oswego to capture Fort Niagara. At last success began to smile on the English. When the great French fortress at Quebec fell in September of 1759, the fate of the French was certain. One great French fort still had to be destroyed, and that was Montreal.

Once again Oswego became the gathering place for the great advance on the last French stronghold. In August of 1760 Lord Amherst with 10,000 men and 1300 Indians embarked from here for Montreal. If you had been standing on the bank at the mouth of our river, you would have seen then the greatest army that was ever assembled on our continent up to that time. The English soldiers in their red coats and the Indian warriors eager for battle made a stirring sight. To the beat of marching drums, the soldiers boarded hundreds of batteaux and began the descent on Montreal. When the fort fell on September 8, England was recognized the victor and peace followed. The English had won their savage checker game and the French gave up all the lands which they had claimed.

There was one great leader, however, who was not ready to accept the English king as his master. This leader was the western Indian, Chief Pontiac. Pontiac was a stalwart man of the forests and streams. His influence over the Indians around Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, with whom the French had been friendly, was great. When the French gave up the struggle, Chief Pontiac saw that the English would move in, cut down the forests, and build farms. Said Pontiac, "I will gather together all braves who will stop these white men from taking our hunting grounds." Messengers were sent throughout the broad forests. Even the Seneca tribe of the Iroquois were ready to go

on the war path against the English. A day was set to attack all the English posts, and Pontiac counted on the help of the French. In July 1763 Detroit was besieged by Pontiac, and many other posts were captured by the Indians. White men were driven from the Ohio Valley and many lost their lives.

The aid expected from the French did not come because they had already surrendered. Now the English soldiers were sent against the uprising tribes. Before long Pontiac saw that his chances of success were poor and agreed to meet Sir William Johnson in Oswego in the spring of 1766 to talk peace.

At first the English feared the great chief would not keep his word. However, in July a long procession of canoes carrying chiefs and warriors of the western tribes was seen gliding slowly down the lake toward Oswego. Here Chiefs of the Iroquois were gathered to gaze upon the great Pontiac as he came to bow to England's power and smoke the pipe of peace. The manly form of Johnson, wrapped in a great scarlet blanket, extended his hand in welcome to Pontiac who took it with great respect but with a slight air of defiance.

Somewhere near the site of the Pontiac Hotel, the great council was supposed to have taken place. With great ceremony it opened. The pipe of peace was offered by Johnson and passed around, after which he made a long speech telling the benefits of peace. For several days speeches were exchanged between the English and the Indians. Finally on the last day of August, Sir William gave to each of the chiefs a silver medal with the inscription "A pledge of peace and friendship with Great Britain." Then Pontiac and his warriors launched their canoes, loaded with presents, upon Lake Ontario, and with weird chants paddled their way back toward the setting sun. At last the long struggle gave England the possession of Oswego. It was now hoped that the rising sun would bring trade and settlements.

UNIT IV

HOW OSWEGO BECAME A PART OF THE UNITED STATES

1. General Washington Directed the Last Move of the Revolutionary War against Fort Ontario.

As soon as France lost control of the regions around the lakes, the trade in furs was resumed vigorously. Now some of the English traders said, "Let us return to Oswego and rebuild our trade with the Indians." Soon friendly Indians were again meeting the traders at Oswego, and peltries were sent over the Oswego water trail to the Mohawk, thence to Albany. During Pontiac's uprising the trading fell off, but after the great peace conference, commerce in skins picked up rapidly.

While the woods around Oswego echoed with the voices of white traders and the red hunters, voices other than peaceful were raised all along the coast from New York Colony to Georgia. A great unrest had seized the English colonists in America. It was directed against the English king, George III. The war with the French had been very expensive, and the king planned to have his American subjects help pay the costs by putting high taxes on them. While the Americans were willing to pay their share, they felt the king was not fair in his methods. Finally the Americans broke away from England and established a new government which they called the United States. This fact, along with others, brought on the Revolutionary War. Under George Washington the Americans sought to shape a new government free from the tyranny of any king.

As soon as war was declared, the revolting Americans searched for those who remained loyal to the English king. There were many of them. They were called loyalists. Some were imprisoned, their property taken, and in some cases they were hanged. Thousands hastily packed their belongings and fled. Most of them went to England, but several thousand went overland to Canada. One of the most traveled routes used by the refugees to Canada was through Oswego. They followed the

old army trail up the Mohawk, then through Oneida Lake, and down the Oswego River. One of those who fled from the Americans was Sir John Johnson, the son of Sir William Johnson. He had inherited the estates of his father, and when he learned he was to be arrested, he gathered his Indians and other colonists in the Mohawk valley and went over to Canada. During the war he caused much damage to New York settlements in raids which he organized in Canada.

No real fighting took place at Oswego during the Revolution, but at one time it saw a red-coated army under Colonel Barry St. Leger pass through from Canada. It was St. Leger's plan to use the old water trail through Oswego to reach Albany, where he would unite with another British army. St. Leger succeeded in getting as far as Oriskany when American colonists fell upon him, and in the bloody battle of Oriskany his army was turned back. Retracing their path through Oswego, St. Leger's army returned in defeat to Canada. On a stone marker near the Oswego Post Office is a bronze tablet commemorating St. Leger's route.

Throughout the war the British had used the strategic position of Fort Ontario to keep in touch with the Indians who were still loyal to them. Realizing this General Washington sent an order to Colonel Willet at Fort Stanwix (Rome): "With a small force scale the walls and surprise Fort Ontario." In the winter of 1783 the Americans started toward Oswego and after a hard journey found themselves on what is now Oak Hill. They were soon discovered by the British, however, and the guns of the fort turned upon them. Throwing away their ladders in the hollow back of Oak Hill, they returned to Fort Stanwix to find that peace had been declared. It is said that years later early settlers found evidence of the ladders left by the American soldiers.

2. The British Did Not Give Up Fort Ontario Until Long After the Treaty of Peace with the United States.

At last peace seemed about to come to the area around Oswego when Benjamin Franklin and others signed the Treaty of

Paris in 1783. The treaty provided that Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River should divide this area of the United States from the British possessions. The British garrison at Fort Ontario, however, received no orders to leave and the English flag continued to fly over its walls for thirteen years longer (1796).^{*} Other posts like Detroit and Niagara were also held just as was Oswego. The reason was because the British claimed the Americans had not satisfied some of the terms of the peace treaty made by Franklin.

During all these thirteen years the Americans were much annoyed by the presence of the British in the fort. They examined all boats and people that passed in or out of the Oswego River. They held up trading with Canada. They prevented furs from going up the Oswego River to Albany and instead sent them to Canada. Naturally the Americans did not want to settle around Oswego as long as an enemy held the fort here.

Finally it was necessary to arrange another treaty with Great Britain. This treaty is known as the Jay Treaty. By it Britain gave up the forts along the lakes. On July 15, 1796 the British flag was pulled down at Fort Ontario and the command turned over to the Americans.^{**} When the American flag was hoisted, Oswego became a real part of the United States. Now the eyes of settlers turned more eagerly to the lands around Oswego.

^{*} Oswego is supposed to be the last post given up by the English after the treaty of peace.

^{**} Just 100 years later, July 15, 1896, Oswego held a great celebration commemorating the event. Many national figures came here to speak. It was a gala day.

UNIT V

HOW THE FIRST SETTLERS CAME INTO OSWEGO COUNTY

1. Early Settlers First Occupied Lands Around Oneida Lake.

While much activity had taken place around Oswego, it was still considered an outpost of civilization. Its story up to now

had been one of struggle. Life here was dangerous and it required strong men. When men decided to take their families into Oswego lands after peace was declared, it was still a brave undertaking. The traders of earlier days had come only at good times of the year. They had not planned to stay. When their work was done, they had hurried back to civilization. With the settlers it was different. They sought to buy land, clear the forests, and make the wilderness their home.

After the dangers of war had passed, the wilderness lands around Oswego were put up for sale by New York State. While New York claimed all the lands after the Revolution, so did the Iroquois Indians. Thus it was necessary to purchase the lands in central and northern New York from the Indians. By a treaty the Indians were given reservations to live on and certain fishing places. Also they were promised a certain amount of goods and money each year. You will be interested to know that to this day the State still makes this yearly payment to the Indians.

With lands to buy and the Indians satisfied, men turned their faces into the wilderness for new homes. Following the water trail from the Mohawk valley, they came through Wood Creek into Oneida Lake. The first white settler in Oswego County stopped at the location of Fort Brewerton, at the end of Oneida Lake, and built a tavern. He probably reasoned that other settlers would soon be following the water trail. His name was Oliver Stevens and he came in 1789. Soon others followed and picked likely places around Oneida Lake where they erected rude cabins and planted gardens. Most of their time was occupied with getting food and clearing their land. As yet no settlers lived near the mouth of the Oswego river, probably because the British still held the fort there. Other brave men did push on past the fort and out on Lake Ontario as they sought lands along the lake east and west of Oswego.

One prominent early settler who liked the lands along Oneida Lake was George Scriba. Scriba was born in Germany, lived in Holland, and went to New York City to become a merchant. When the state lands were put on sale after the war, Scriba

decided to purchase a great deal of it and induce settlers to buy the land. He thought he would thus make his fortune. In 1792 Scriba purchased 525,000 acres of land which covered all the area between Oneida Lake and Lake Ontario east of Oswego River. He paid about thirty-nine cents an acre for it. On the site of what is now Constantia, Scriba two years later built his first settlement which he called New Rotterdam. A saw-mill and log cabins were soon erected. Then he turned his attention to an opening on Lake Ontario where he had erected more log buildings at the mouth of the Salmon Creek. He thought this settlement would become a city and he called it Vera Cruz. Today we know it as Mexico Point. From Rotterdam to Vera Cruz he had a road constructed to stimulate business between Oneida Lake and Lake Ontario. For a time it looked as if Vera Cruz would become the principal place on Lake Ontario, but Scriba's dreams were not to come true. The undertaking had cost him a tremendous amount of money, accidents had occurred, and settlers came slowly into the lands he had laid out. He died a poor man and was buried in Constantia. The Scriba home may still be seen in the village of Constantia where his descendants live.

As time passed some settlers did move into the Scriba lands.

2. The Early Settlers Worked Very Hard to Build New Homes in the Wilderness.

It seems to us now that Oswego County could never have been a wilderness. Yet that is just what it was when the settlers came. It was the home of wild animals like the bear, deer, and panther. It was covered with great trees. It is no wonder that the early settlers lived at first near the lakes and streams, because the best way to travel in this wilderness was by boat. Many of these brave men came from New England or from the eastern part of New York State. They turned their faces westward in search of good cheap land for their farms.

Suppose you were the child of pioneer parents who came to Oswego County in 1805; how did you come? what did you see? You came in a Durham boat which sailed on rivers and was pushed by long poles on streams. The most important articles your

parents brought were an axe, a plow, seeds, a spinning wheel, some cooking utensils, a Bible, and an almanac. You came up the Mohawk River through Wood Creek into the Oneida River, and then into Oneida Lake. Here you stopped at Scriba's little log settlement at Rotterdam, where friends met your family and put your goods on a great wagon drawn by sturdy oxen. You followed the road Scriba had built through the woods. What a road it was! It was muddy and tree stumps were seen in it everywhere. After a half day of weary travel, you saw blue smoke drifting up over the trees, and you knew that you were near a house.

Presently you came to a little log cabin not any larger than your school room. The pioneer friends who had moved there the year before were glad to see you. You stayed with them while your father built a log house for your own family. You looked around the house and noticed that the floor was made of thick planks and the furniture of rough wood, all made by hand. Generally there was only one window for light. At one end of the cabin was a big fireplace which warmed the room and in which all the cooking was done. Your job was to help get the wood for the fireplace, and it burned a great deal of it.

After a day or so your father, with a few friends, went off into the woods, and you heard them chopping trees. They were making a clearing for a log house for you. As the men worked they became happier. The house was soon ready to "raise." When the house was built, you moved in. Your father continued to chop down the trees as he cleared the land in order to plant some wheat and corn. What became of all the trees he cut down? The only way to get rid of the great trees was to burn them, and great piles of them were burned. The ashes were carefully saved for they could be sold for twelve cents a bushel. These ashes were sold to make potash, and potash was used in making soap. This was one of the ways the pioneer farmer had to get money. Usually, however, the ashes were traded for goods he needed. Most of the business of the pioneer was done by trading.

Your father worked very hard. He not only had to clear the land of trees, but the brush had to be trimmed and burned. When a space was cleared, he plowed the earth between the tree stumps and planted the seed he had brought with him. Then he prepared the log house for winter by "chinking" up any spaces between the logs with clay. Rails had to be split for fences, and food prepared for the long cold season.

3. The Pioneers Ate Simple Food and Wore Plain Clothing.

These pioneers did not have the variety of foods to eat that you have. During the winter they lived on salt pork and deer meat. Sometimes they had wild turkey, rabbit, or duck. Their bread was often made from corn meal. As yet there were few grist mills and a farmer sometimes took his wheat, if he had any, as far as forty miles to be ground into flour. Maple sugar was used instead of the white cane sugar which we have. From their garden patches they had vegetables in the summer and fall, but no tomatoes. They thought tomatoes were poisonous. They drank tea, mostly, for as yet coffee was not commonly used.

Almost all of the clothing was made in the log house. Wool had to be bought and then spun by the housewife into yarn. A good share of the mother's time was devoted to mending clothing, for each article must be made to last as long as possible. Elegant indeed was the family who had a Sunday "outfit."

These pioneers were industrious and happy, but life was hard for a lazy person. Every year saw improvements made in their farms. When a family had money enough, cows and sheep were bought. As the roads improved, horses took the place of oxen. As more pioneers came into the area there was more visiting between neighbors. The women had "quilting bees" and occasionally the family traveled a long way through the woods to Oswego where they attended a dance. They called them "balls."

When James Fenimore Cooper was in Oswego in 1808, he said they sent out through the country side for women to come to a ball which they were going to have. They were brought by boat and horse and when all were assembled, many of them had neither shoes nor stockings. All entered the grand march, and

those who had shoes and stockings danced the Virginia reel, while those without took part in country dances.

UNIT VI

HOW A SETTLEMENT STARTED AT OSWEGO

1. The Lake Business Attracted the First Residents of Oswego.

Just as soon as the British left Fort Ontario in 1796, a settler and his wife came to make their home at Oswego. He was Neil McMullin, a merchant of Kingston, New York. They came in a boat by the long hard trip over the Mohawk River, Wood Creek, Oneida Lake, and Oswego River. He brought with him the frame of a house which he erected near the river bank where West Seneca Street is now located. This was the first framed house in the place and in it was born Oswego's first baby, Rankin McMullin, their son.* Other people came to Oswego but it is doubtful if, at first, many remained through the hard winters. Some returned to the little settlement at Salt Point, now Syracuse, during the cold weather. In spring they would return to Oswego.

Realizing that the area at the mouth of the river would become a place of importance, the State immediately made plans to lay out a community and give it a name. A town was laid out with streets and a market place on the west side of the river. The town extended from the lake to Utica Street, and from the river only as far as West Sixth Street. Of course it was covered with trees and the streets were marked by cutting blazes in the trees. In 1797 a law of the State said that the place should be "called forever thereafter by the name of Oswego."

Our last story told how the pioneers on the Scriba lands came to make farms. Those who came to Oswego wanted to do business on the lake and river. They knew that as more people

*Mr. Ernest C. Whitbeck, Jr., of Rochester, N. Y., also makes the claim that his great grandfather, John McNair, was the first white child born at Oswego.

went west commerce on the lakes would become great. They knew, too, that business with Canada would develop. By 1802 there were six families living at Oswego. Most of them still lived in log houses. Among these early business-men-settlers was Matthew McNair, who came here from Canada. He was one of the first boat builders in Oswego. He also shipped goods on the lake and river.

Another ambitious man who sought his fortune at Oswego was Daniel Burt. Daniel and his several sturdy sons were valuable to the young settlement. When the United States government decided, in 1803, that Oswego should be made a port, it was a son, Joel, who was made the first collector. It was his job to collect a tax, or duty, on all the goods sent through Oswego. Until that time goods went through free. The tax caused a great deal of smuggling around Oswego. So it was no easy task that Joel took on. Mr. Burt built the first ferry across the Oswego River. To carry people a little skiff was used which could be easily paddled, but for horses and wagons it was necessary to use a heavy scow.* Joel also tended the ferry that was established at the foot of what is now Seneca Street. He built the first log house on the east side of the river at the foot of this street.

Another son, Bradner Burt, built the first saw mill. It was with great difficulty that the building was erected for, after sending as far as Fulton, only twelve men could be found to help raise the heavy timbers. A saw mill and a grist mill were always important establishments in every early settlement. It was necessary to have lumber to build houses, and without a grist mill people could not have flour.

Bradner Burt also built the first schoolhouse in 1806.** It was used as a church, as well, whenever a traveling preacher visited the little settlement. It is said that Miss Artemisa Waterhouse, of Fulton, was the first teacher in Oswego, and that she taught only a few pupils in someone's home. The first school

* A marker recently erected points out the location of this early ferry.

**This schoolhouse was located on the northeast corner of West Third and Seneca Streets and is indicated now by a state marker.

master to teach in the frame school built by Bradner Burt was a Dr. Caldwell. He was the settlement's teacher and doctor at the same time.

Then in the year 1810, there came to Oswego a man who became famous in the history of the community. His name was Alvin Bronson. One of our streets has been named for him. Bronson saw that Oswego would be an important place on the water highway as the West was opened up. He immediately set to work to have a vessel and a warehouse constructed. From the first his business prospered. All kinds of goods were finding their way to Oswego by river boats. When they reached Oswego, they had to be transferred to lake boats. The sending of goods by the lake was called the forwarding business. Bronson's business soon made him an important figure in the little settlement. Later he became the first village president and president of the Board of Trade, which is what we now call the Chamber of Commerce.

2. The First Important Shipping Business at Oswego Was the Moving of Salt.

Salt had been known to exist around Syracuse from the time of the "Black Gowns." When a settlement started there, its chief occupation was the making of salt. For over a hundred years it was an important business. Salt was much more valued in those days than it is now, and the salt business expanded rapidly. The cheapest way to ship salt to the West was by way of the Oswego River and Lake Ontario. Boats and rafts carried the salt down the Oswego River to Oswego, where it was placed on lake sailing boats to be sent westward and to Canada. Of course there was trade in other commodities which were sent by boat. Emigrants going west went through Oswego, as highway travel was difficult at that early date. Indian goods and manufactured goods from the East also came through, but the greatest volume of business was in the sending of salt. Bronson and McNair both shared in a large part of this trade.

In 1808 James Fenimore Cooper said that for the first time money took the place of barrels of salt as the medium of exchange

in Oswego. The place was described then as a settlement of twenty rude houses on the edge of a thirty-mile wilderness. Cooper was here for a little over a year and he described it many years afterward when he wrote the "Pathfinder." You will want to read this interesting book because it tells a story about Oswego, many parts of which are true.

Two years later (1810) DeWitt Clinton visited Oswego. Clinton, you remember, was famous as the governor of New York State and the man responsible for the building of the Erie Canal. He found eleven vessels belonging to this port and described five wharves covered with barrels of salt. He said that in 1810 salt shipments from Oswego amounted to over 30,000 barrels.

Thus it was that Oswego became a shipping place early. Today it is credited with being the oldest freshwater port in the United States.

UNIT VII

WHY THE BRITISH RETURNED TO OSWEGO IN 1814

1. The Embargo Caused Smuggling to Develop at Oswego.

When Thomas Jefferson was President of the United States, he became angered because British warships stopped our ships at sea and sometimes took off our sailors. At that time England, at war with Napoleon, tried to prevent neutral countries from sending goods to France. So Jefferson had a law passed, called the embargo, which forbade Americans to trade with the British. To people along the Great Lakes, this meant that the trade just begun with Canada would have to stop. It was a terrible blow to them and many determined to send goods anyway.

The President was angry because the people of northern New York tried to violate the law so he sent soldiers to Oswego, Sackets Harbor, and Ogdensburg. The soldiers arrested anyone who tried to ship goods of any kind to Canada. The result of all this was that goods were secretly sent through the woods in

such a way as to avoid the soldiers, or sometimes cargoes were slipped by during the night.

You should understand that the people along the lake lived so closely to Canada and depended so much on their trade that they did not have the same feeling against England as did many Americans. Presently when war did break out between England and the United States, the men of northern New York fought bravely even though many of them were opposed to the war.

2. The War of 1812 Brought the British Again to Oswego in Search of Supplies Destined for Sackets Harbor.

By the year 1812 the Americans were so furious with the British for taking our sailors at sea that war was declared. It caused much concern in the little settlement at Oswego. It meant that the pursuits of peace would have to give way to the horror of war. It was more than likely that Oswego would receive a visit from the enemy because it was the doorway that opened the interior to our other lake ports like Niagara, Sackets Harbor, and Ogdensburg. As the harbor at Oswego was too shallow to construct the larger war vessels then being built, the government decided to build their boats at Sackets Harbor. So all the equipment and ammunition needed for the vessels had to be sent by water from Albany, through Oswego, to Sackets Harbor. Therefore large quantities of supplies were forwarded to Oswego for this purpose.

To care for these supplies, Alvin Bronson was appointed military storekeeper by the government. Matthew McNair assisted him. The new duties kept the men busy. Lake Ontario, during 1813, became a scene of ship building on the part of both the Americans and the English in Canada. It was a race to see who could build the largest vessels.

Finally in the spring of 1814, the British learned that heavy guns and naval supplies were being sent from Albany by way of Oswego to Sackets Harbor. These supplies the British wanted to destroy. So they sailed for Oswego in May of 1814.

If you had been one of the soldiers on guard at Fort Ontario on the morning of May 6, how excited you would have been when

you saw on the lake a long line of British vessels in full sail heading in toward Oswego. You would have sounded the alarm and immediately sleepy Oswego would have sprung into life. For here was danger and real danger. It was well understood that the old fort gave little protection. Its guns were few and they were old. Then, too, there were not nearly enough soldiers on hand to offer any resistance. The best that could be done was to prevent the enemy from getting any supplies which were on hand. What the British did not know was that the greater part of the supplies were at the Falls (Fulton), where they had been unloaded before being sent to Oswego. The few supplies at Oswego were placed on board a government schooner and on one of Bronson's boats and both were sunk in the river. The commanding officer at the fort then ordered many tents erected on the west side of the river facing the lake. This act was to deceive the British into thinking there were many more soldiers at the fort than they had supposed.

After feigning a landing to determine the strength of the Americans, Sir James Yeo did send his red coats ashore the next day. Eight British war vessels stood off the mouth of the river and the nearest opened up a heavy cannon fire on the fort. Colonel Mitchell returned the fire as long as he thought wise and then, leaving the fort in the hands of a few soldiers, he withdrew his force up the road to Fulton in order to protect the stores there. As they retreated the Americans cut down trees across the roadway to make the pursuit difficult. The British landed in fifteen small boats, and rows of red-coated troops ascended the hill to the fort which they took with little difficulty. Fortunately for the Americans, the British did not pursue them. If they had the bloodshed would have been greater, and the supplies at the Falls might have been taken.

In searching for the supplies at Oswego, Sir James Yeo captured Alvin Bronson and a few others. Not succeeding in learning the location of the supplies from Bronson they took him, a captive, on one of the English vessels. On another boat they took a fourteen old boy by the name of Carlos Colton who was

Bronson's helper and clerk. From him they sought to get information about the stores.

"Come now," they said, "Mr. Bronson has owned up all about the supplies and you may as well do so, too, and save going to Quebec."

"I don't believe a word of it," promptly replied the plucky boy. The British officers were amused and soon gave up their attempts to get the information from him.

The British did not learn the location of the supplies and soon sailed away from Oswego. The expedition had been expensive and little was gained by it. Bronson was taken to Canada but later was released.

As soon as possible the supplies were sent down from Fulton and on to Sackets Harbor. While on the way the British endeavored to capture them again. This time the Americans succeeded in beating them off and the supplies were carried through*.

Early in 1815 the news of peace was received, and people returned to the task of improving and developing the area in Oswego County.

UNIT VIII

HOW OSWEGO BECAME A VILLAGE

1. Oswego County Was Formed from Onondaga and Oneida Counties.

The war had slowed up the development of the little community at the mouth of the river but did not stop it altogether. During this period the land on the east side was laid off in streets and village lots. As time went on this area was known as East Oswego, while the settlement across the river was known as West Oswego. Gradually more people came to both East and West Oswego. Larger houses took the place of the small frame and log houses. The lake business revived. Mail was now carried on horseback to both Syracuse and Utica.

*For further details see pages 91-92.

In regard to the political division of the lands around Oswego, there was this interesting situation: West Oswego was located in Onondaga County, while East Oswego was in Oneida County. Thus the settlers who came into the Scriba lands were in a different county than those who lived across the river. Finally the people requested the legislature to form a new county to be known as Oswego County. This was done in 1816 by taking part of the lands from Onondaga and Oneida Counties.

Immediately the question of the location of the county seat arose. Oswego wanted to secure it and so did the little settlement at Pulaski. The farmers in the county felt that Oswego was not central enough, even though it was the most promising community in the new county. Finally an agreement was made whereby both places were designated as the meeting place of the county court. The first court met in Oswego in 1816 in the school house located on the corner of West Third and Seneca Streets. With its meeting the people of Oswego, now numbering close to five hundred, really thought their village was amounting to something. To this day Oswego and Pulaski take turns in holding court.

In the same year (1816) the first church was organized. It was the First Presbyterian, and it, too, was organized in the ever useful school house. The society continued to worship there until 1825 when the first church building was erected. Other early religious groups also organized in the school houses. Soon other groups founded their respective houses of worship.

It was not long before Oswego boasted of its first newspaper. That was in the year 1817, and it was known as the Oswego Gazette. Two years later it was published under the name of the Palladium and its subscription price was \$2.00 a year. It was an excellent paper for that period, and the fact that it has survived to the present time makes it one of the oldest newspapers in central New York. In 1925 the Palladium joined with the Oswego Times to form our present newspaper.

2. The Early Villagers Worked Hard to Develop Oswego.
The people in the little village confidently expected that their

location on the lake and river would make them prosper just as soon as lake transportation developed on a larger scale. The waters rushing down the Oswego River could also be used to turn the wheels of mills. In 1820 Alvin Bronson and a partner built the first large grist mill that Oswego was to have, but milling was not to begin for another decade. The wheat ground at Oswego then was received largely from the farmers in the county.

During this period the farmers in the western part of the state were clamouring for some means to send their wheat to the market at New York. It was too expensive to send it by land, and many of the rivers were too shallow in which to navigate a boat. For instance in the Oswego River, there were many rapids and a waterfall at Fulton. The result of this demand was the making of a great canal. It was planned to have the canal connect the Great Lakes and the Hudson River. DeWitt Clinton came to Oswego in 1810 for the purpose of seeing if the canal could come here. When it was constructed, however, it connected Lake Erie instead of Lake Ontario. It was begun in 1817 and finished in 1825. Up to that time it was the greatest change ever seen in transportation methods.

To be sure Oswego people were sadly disappointed that the Erie Canal did not come here. The canal at once took much of the business that formerly came down the Oswego River. People settled along the banks of the new canal at places like Syracuse and Rochester. Times looked pretty dull for a while at the promising village, but the men of Oswego did not give up. Oswego still made improvements. A lighthouse was built near the fort in 1821, and in the next year the first bridge was built across the river on the site of the present lower bridge. To cross it one had to pay a fee. Barrel staves, salt, and some lumber were still shipped from our port. Finally Alvin Bronson was elected to the State Senate and set to work to have the State build a canal from Oswego to Syracuse to connect with the Erie Canal. His labors brought results, for in 1826 work was begun. It required two long years to dig the ditch, for that is all it was compared to the canal we have today. Many men helped in its

construction. Some were farm boys from the surrounding countryside, while others were immigrants from across the sea who had come to this country. The old canal which followed the side of the east bank of the river was only four feet deep and was dug by hand with shovels. Its locks were small wooden affairs. The little canal boats were drawn by slow mules or horses. Along the side of the canal was the towpath upon which the mules walked. If you look sharply along the east side of the river above Minetto you can still see remains of the old canal.

Immediately upon the completion of the canal, commerce came to Oswego. The village became a scene of great activity. Men like Abram Varick, who lived as far away as New York City, began to buy large pieces of land along the river. Land values rose and speculation followed. By 1828 the people of Oswego numbered over a thousand, and then it was decided to secure a charter as a village. The State Legislature granted the charter and Alvin Bronson, the great worker for the little village, became its first president.





THE OLD AND NEW MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION ALONG
THE OSWEGO CANAL

MOTOR DRIVEN CANAL BOAT OF TODAY

(LEFT) HORSE DRAWN CANAL BOAT OF FIFTY YEARS AGO

UNIT IX.

HOW PEOPLE IN THE VILLAGE LIVED AND WORKED

1. The Grinding of Wheat Formed Oswego Village's Most Promising Early Industry.

More people came to Oswego village to live and work. Within a few years (1836) its population was nearly 5,000. Everyone kept busy, for there were many different occupations by this time. One of the most promising industries to start in this period was that of grinding wheat. This commodity was brought down the lakes from the west. How was wheat brought from the other lakes into Lake Ontario when the great falls at Niagara prevented a boat from passing from one lake into the other? The answer was that Canada had constructed the Welland Canal connecting Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. Find it on the map, for it has been and always will be important to Oswego. Thus there were now two ways for wheat to go to New York City. One was by way of the Erie Canal from Buffalo, and the other was through the Oswego Canal by way of the Welland Canal and Oswego. For many shippers the Oswego route was cheaper because it was nearer New York than was Buffalo. Since tolls had to be paid on canals, it was more advantageous to send wheat or flour by the cheaper route. Thus lake vessels started bringing wheat to Oswego.

Now enterprising men saw the opportunity to grind the wheat brought here and make flour of it. Waterpower turned the stone wheels which ground the wheat. Then it was a simple matter to place the flour on canal boats and send it on to Syracuse and, by way of the Erie Canal, to New York. One of the men who saw the milling opportunities here was Henry Fitzhugh, who built a large grist mill. Today a park and a school in Oswego bear his name. Soon other mills were put up, and as time went on Oswego became a large flour manufacturing city. By 1847 the mills were turning out 4,200 barrels of flour a day. During the 1860-s the largest flour mill in the world was here. Huge elevators for storing wheat lined the mouth of the river.

They were great high wooden buildings and not cement like the elevator we have today. Your grandfather remembers them well. He can also tell you about the great fire that destroyed them in his day. This industry which became so large had its origin while Oswego was still a village.

The village also had two cotton factories, three tanneries, four saw mills, and iron works, besides its six grist mills and other manufactories (1836). Boat building also formed an important occupation for many men. Both lake vessels and canal boats were constructed, and in 1836 there were 35 vessels being built at one time in the shipyards.

2. Life in the Village was Pleasant and Peaceful.

In those days the rush of an automobile or the roar of a train did not disturb the village residents because they were not yet known. In order to get from one part of the village to another people walked. Beautiful shade trees lined the gravel and dirt streets. Those who could afford them owned a horse and carriage, and the drives through the streets and along the river were pleasant indeed. Occasionally a cow might stray from its pasture and find its way along the village streets.

Perhaps one of the most important events of those quiet days was the arrival of the canal packet boat from Syracuse. The packet boats were the passenger carriers such as our busses are today. A trip to Syracuse and return on the packet was an exciting journey for the boys and girls of Oswego. Passengers sat on the deck under their parasols and watched the landscape slide by as the faithful horses pulled the boat mile after mile. As the packet approached Oswego, the sound of its bugle notes could be heard throughout the village as its arrival was announced. That was the signal for a gathering of village folks at the landing place "to see the packet come in," while the horses which towed it made a spurt for the finish. The landing was at the east end of the lower bridge.

Strange cargoes came to the landing place. Sometimes it was a boatload of people from a foreign country who had emigrated and were going to new and strange homes in our West.

Sometimes horses and wagons were brought by the canal boats, as well as furniture belonging to the emigrant folks. Always one looked for friends who had made the long journey to Syracuse and back, for they would have news of what was happening outside their village.

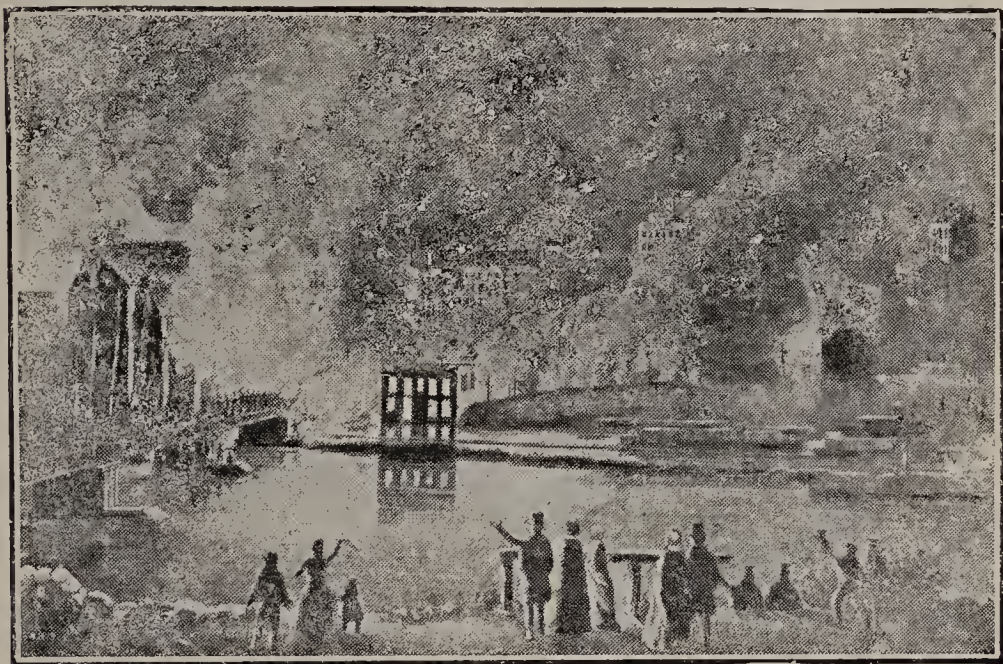
In order to make the packet trip to Syracuse a fare of \$1.00 was charged. If meals were purchased on the way an additional charge was made. While today we can travel to Syracuse in a little over an hour, it then required the good share of a day, or usually between eight or nine hours. Later when the highway to Syracuse was improved, the stage coaches could make the trip in five hours. Both the packets and stages were arranged to meet the packets on the Erie Canal going either to Albany or Buffalo. In spite of the long time required to go from place to place in those days, there seemed to be many people traveling.

In the evenings the taverns rang with song and laughter of the boatmen and travelers. And what sport the lake men must have made of the canalers whose life was quiet and safe as compared to the dangers of sailing on the lakes! In place of a public library, some of the people went in the evening to a reading room opened by the publisher of the Palladium. Here, under an oil lamp, one could read the magazines which were on file. For this privilege one paid \$4.00 a year.

One day the Palladium published news that for days set everyone talking. It seems a story had survived that, when the French captured Oswego some seventy-five years before, the English buried their money in a deep well inside old Fort Oswego. In the early days of the village, the remains of the old fort on the west side were still to be seen, and it was thought if one could find the well he would find his fortune in it. Numerous searches had been made and all kinds of devices used, but the treasure-hunters could not find even the well. Finally a man from Sandy Creek, by the name of Scripture, found the well inside the old ruins. It was sixteen feet deep, four feet across, and handsomely walled. Scripture disappeared from the village the next morning after his discovery and whether he found the

treasurer no one knows to this day. He did find some old cartridge boxes, bullets, etc., which he threw out of the well. The place was a curiosity to the villagers for some time.

Every day, except Sunday, a great bell rang its message across the town that it was 9 A. M., noon, and 9 P. M. For his labors the bell ringer was paid the princely sum of one dollar a week. In this way people could set their watches and clocks, for then there was no great clock such as we have on our city hall today.



A FIRE IN OLD OSWEGO

Then, too, there was no fire department with its men ready to rush away at a moment's call. As now a fire was a dreaded event. With so many wooden buildings and with the poor fire-fighting equipment of those days, a fire could quickly spread and cause great disaster. Every resident had to keep a fire bucket

filled with water near the front of his house. When the great village bell rang the fire signal, everyone rushed with his buckets to the scene of the fire and assisted.

One day in the year 1835, a fire started in the grist mill of Henry Fitzhugh. The alarm was sounded by the bell and by word of mouth as people excitedly passed on the cry of "Fire, fire!" What excitement followed! Everyone in the village ran with his bucket to the mill. It was with great difficulty that the fire wardens formed the double lines of men from the river to the mill. Up one line of men passed the buckets of water to be poured on the flames. Then down the other line the empty buckets passed back to the river to be filled. In the haste much of the water would be spilled, and by the time it reached the flames there was sometimes little to throw on. In the same year Alvin Bronson's mill burned and also some twenty other buildings. If the buildings were not saved it was not because the men of the village did not work hard to save them. Fire-fighting was as brave a task then as it is today.

UNIT X

HOW OSWEGO BECAME A CITY

1. Oswego was the Most Important Port on Lake Ontario.

The movement of grain from the west continued to find its way to Oswego in ever greater quantities. Consequently more ships came into our harbor, and more canal boats were required to carry flour away from here. By 1847 over 4,000,000 bushels of grain were received and over 150,000 barrels of flour sent. Besides this Syracuse sent twice as much salt by canal boats through Oswego than was sent through Buffalo. Lumber was also an important commodity received from Canada. In 1847 some 34,000,000 board feet of it was handled, while in 1860, the figure was nearly 200,000,000 board feet. Many tons of iron rails from England were handled through the port as they were sent westward by way of the Great Lakes. At this period the

rivalry between Oswego and Buffalo was great, and it continued for many years. Both sought the carrying trade for their own port.

By 1850 there were eighteen flour mills in Oswego turning out 8,750 barrels of flour in one day. Twenty years later there were eleven grain elevators and sixteen flour mills facing on the inner harbor. It was a common sight then to see the harbor filled with sailing vessels, their tall masts reaching toward the sky.

Sensing the prosperity that was coming to Oswego, its people decided to apply for a charter to become a city. In 1848 the State Legislature granted the charter, and James Platt was elected the city's first mayor. The next year a wooden bridge, free of toll, was built by the city at Utica Street.



NORTHWESTERN ELEVATOR

One of the last of the wooden elevators to do business in Oswego. Erected in 1867, it was located in West First Street, where it was managed by O. F. Gaylord. It was destroyed by fire in January, 1922.



A SKETCH OF OSWEGO ABOUT THE TIME IT BECAME A CITY

Notice the upper and lower bridges across the river, the sailing vessels in the harbor, the fort on the left, the lighthouse in the foreground and the steamboat leaving the harbor.

On the lower bridge toll was still charged. The first City Hall was located in the Market Building on Water Street where the village trustees had held their meetings. Today this building is occupied by the ship chandlery of John S. Parsons and the Oswego Door, Sash and Glass Company. By 1850 the population was over 12,000.

2. Oswego Became Known as the Starch City.

The excellent facilities at Oswego for commerce also attracted manufacturing. In the same year that Oswego became

a city. Thomas Kingsford came here to manufacture corn starch. His story is an interesting one. From England Thomas Kingsford came to this country in 1831 to seek success. At first he was employed in a starch factory in New Jersey where his knowledge of chemistry secured him a position. Up to that time starch had not been made with corn. Mr. Kingsford thought that he could make a superior starch from our Indian corn and began experimenting. Patiently he worked at his experiments until he felt he had what he wanted. Then he set up in business with his son Thomson. Recognizing the splendid location and facilities at Oswego, the business was moved here. The organization was called The Oswego Starch Factory. Beginning with only one small building, the industry developed into one of the most extensive in the State. By 1870 it produced a third of all the starch made in the country and gave work to several hundred men. It was thus the principal industry of the city for a long time and made the city famous. Kingsford Corn Starch was a familiar name in homes all over the country. From this industry came the name often applied to Oswego as the Starch City, just as Syracuse was called the Salt City.

After supplying corn starch to the country for three-quarters of a century and being a credit to our community, the great plants are now seen empty and desolate. In 1900 the plant became a part of a large manufacturing company known as the Corn Products Company. Up to 1923 starch was manufactured at Oswego after which the Corn Products Company had to close the local plant under government orders.

Members of the Kingsford family are respected residents of the city today, and the name has been given to one of its schools.

UNIT XI.

HOW PEOPLE TRAVELED ABOUT THE YEAR 1850

1. Oswego was an Important Steamboat Terminal.

Before the coming of the railroads, travel was still difficult

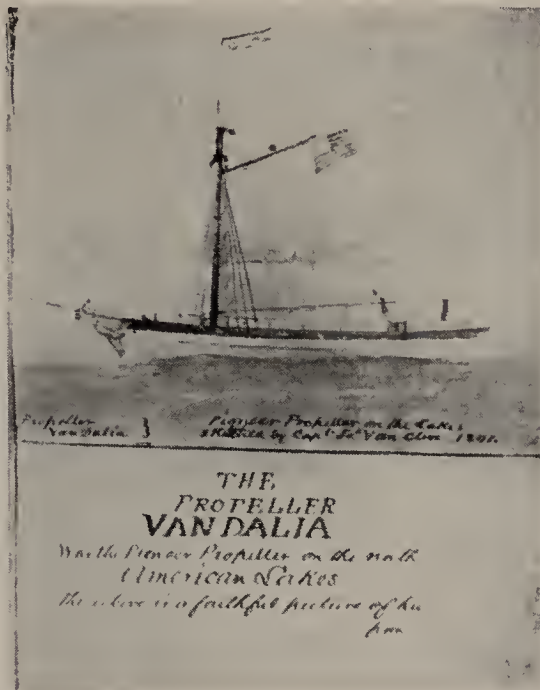
and confined largely to water. Thus the packet lines did a good business, and the steamboat lines on Lake Ontario became an important means of travel.

What excitement the first steamboat caused in little Oswego! It was shortly after the War of 1812 (spring of 1817) that it was seen coming into the harbor. "Look at it!" "Here it comes!" "Look at the black smoke from it!" were the cries of the people as they rushed down to the wharf to see the strange boat without sails or oars. Great bonfires were built all that night to celebrate the coming of the "Ontario." It had been built in Sackets Harbor and was the first steamboat on the lakes. Gradually more steamboats appeared, but they by no means put the sailing vessels out of commission. In general the steamers carried passengers, while sailing vessels transported grain or other commodities.

Steamboats soon became a popular means of travel on the Great Lakes. Oswego became well known to travelers as a canal terminal and lake port. As early as 1830 one could travel from Oswego to Niagara or to Ogdensburg for \$4.00. It was in this service on the lakes that the first propellor boat in the country was used. Oswego will always have the distinction of having first launched, in 1841, this type of steamboat. The "Vandalia" was built in the shipyard of Sylvester Doolittle and financed by a group of men among whom was Alvin Bronson. Screw propellers immediately became popular on the lakes because they enabled ships to pass through the Welland Canal into Lake Erie. Within a short time one could make the trip from Oswego to Chicago without leaving the boat. For families moving with their household goods, this was a great convenience. The fare was \$15.00 with meals provided. Furniture could be carried for \$1.00 a barrel, and a horse and wagon for \$7.00.

By the time Oswego became a city several canal and steamship lines existed here. Later a canal packet line called the "Old Oswego Line" ran boats from New York to Oswego daily. Another company, The Northern Transportation Company, had

a fleet of fourteen lake steamers which ran between Oswego, Cleveland, Detroit, and Chicago.



Courtesy Oil-Power Magazine
Standard Oil Company of N. Y., Inc.

THE "VAN DALIA," PIONEER SCREW-PROPELLOR ON THE GREAT LAKES. THE SKETCH WAS MADE BY CAPTAIN JAMES VAN CLEVE IN 1841

2. Stage Coach Lines Came to Oswego Over Plank Roads.

In order to connect the villages throughout the county, dirt roads had been made through the woods. Travel in coaches over these early roads must have been uncomfortable. In wet weather the wheels sank deeply in the mud, and many times the passengers had to help pull out the coach when it stuck.

Finally someone tired of those roads and conceived the idea of covering the main roads with four-inch planks. Oswego

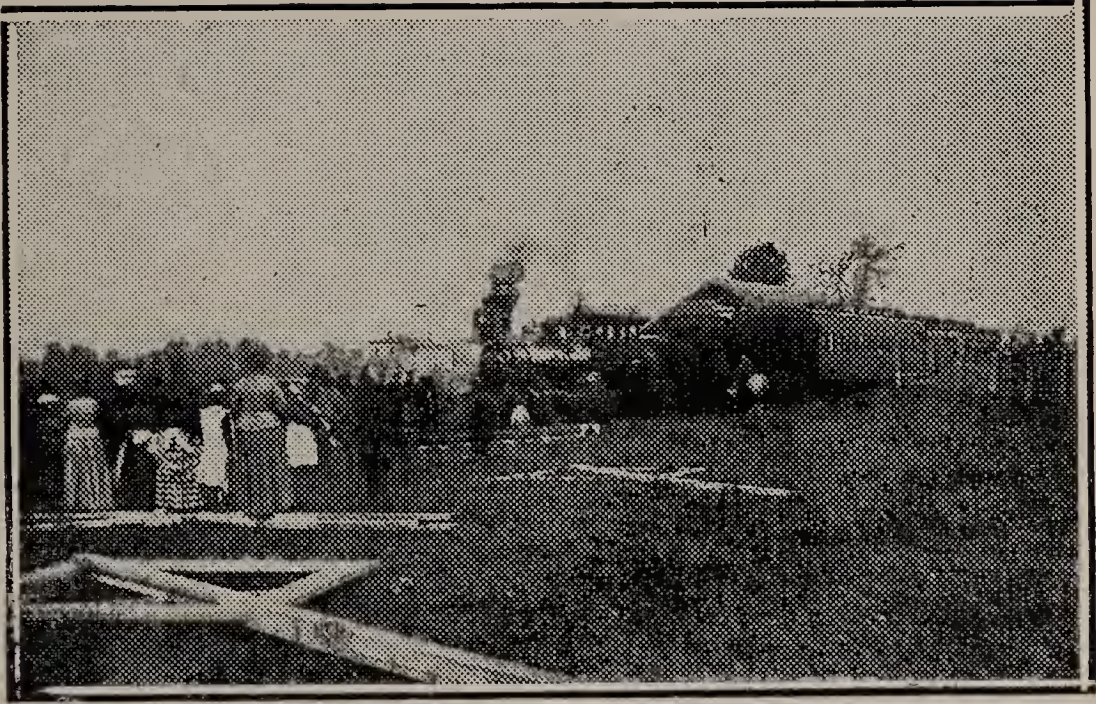
county became a foremost builder of these plank roads. In 1848 one was built from Rome to Oswego, running through Scriba, New Haven, Mexico, Albion, and Williamstown. People traveling from east to west often came to Rome by train, then to Oswego by stage over the smooth plank road; and on westward by the fine lake steamers.

The great coaches carried as many as seventeen passengers, and sometimes as many as five coaches would leave Oswego in one morning. A plank road ran to Syracuse, one to Hannibal and Sterling, and another to Hastings Center probably by way of the Hall Road. Tolls charged on the roads paid for the cost of building. If you visit Kasoag today, you will see one of the old stage coaches used in those days.

3. The Railroad Reached Oswego When It Became a City.

If the building of canals throughout the State had caused people excitement, the building of railroads caused even greater excitement. Here was a device that was not as costly to construct and which could be built most anywhere, while canals could be built only near water. When the railroads reached Syracuse, people in Oswego felt they had to be connected with it.

In the same year that Oswego became a city, a railroad line was built connecting Syracuse and Oswego. Gradually other roads were built connecting Oswego with other important places. At first the lines were used largely for passenger service. They were so much faster than the canal packets that before long the packets began to disappear. Then the railroads began to haul freight which had always been shipped in canal boats. It was soon realized that the railroad would take a great share of the canal business, which it eventually did. This, then, is one of the first reasons why the canal business at Oswego declined as time passed.



"HERE COMES THE LOCOMOTIVE"

The arrival of the early trains at Oswego was always a cause for excitement in the community. A crowd is shown here gathered to see the "steel horse" come in. Notice the curious smoke stack on the engine, and the quaint dress of the women.

UNIT XII

HOW OSWEGO OBTAINED FREE SCHOOLS

1. The First School Was a Log House on Wheels.

Perhaps few other communities can boast of anything so curious as a schoolhouse on wheels. Yet it may truthfully be said that such was the first school in Oswego. That was in the days shortly following the French and Indian War after the English rebuilt and garrisoned the post destroyed by Montcalm.

Major Duncan, the commanding officer of the Scottish regiment stationed here, had the house built to use as a library. He had low wheels placed under it so that it could be moved from one part of the parade ground to another. The house was comfortable inside. Its walls were hung with furs, and his books and maps gave it the appearance of a study. During the long winter months it was Major Duncan's practice to "invite" his subordinate officers and soldiers to the house-on-wheels to study mathematics and military tactics. You will readily understand that the invitation was a command and was not to be disobeyed. No doubt there were some soldiers who attended the school no more willingly than a few of our boys and girls attend school today.

2. Parents Paid a "Rate" to Send Children to the Public Schools.

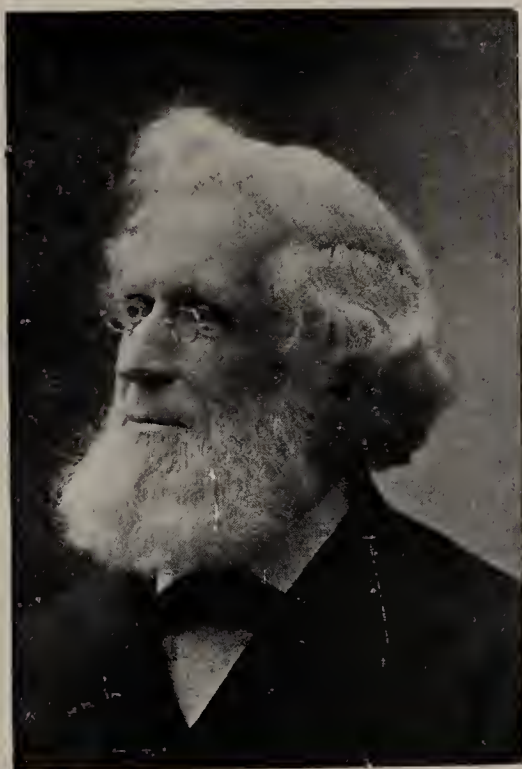
What a change has taken place from the little log school house, built in 1806 at West Third and Seneca streets by Bradner Burt, to the large brick buildings of today! It was not until some ten years later that the first school was taught in East Oswego in a rented room by a Miss Philomela Robinson. It was not until Oswego became a village that the first schoolhouse on that side of the river was erected. On that occasion a few interested people met to vote a hundred dollars to build a school, whereupon many other residents claimed the move was "extravagant and that such expenditures would ruin the town with taxation."

As more people come to the little community, it was necessary to erect more schools. These early schools were humble affairs with one or two rooms. By 1848 there were twelve school districts in the little city, and each district was administered by a separate group of trustees just like country schools. Up to this time there was no such thing as a free school, for parents had to pay a rate for each pupil sent to school.

As early as 1815 private schools existed in Oswego and continued to increase as the population grew.

3. Mr. E. A. Sheldon Organized the First Free Schools in Oswego.

It is often thought that Mr. Edward A. Sheldon was only associated with the Oswego Normal School. Before he became its head he did much for the city schools in Oswego. His story is of interest to Oswegonians.



DR. EDWARD A. SHELDON

As a young man Edward Sheldon came to Oswego to enter the florist business and became concerned over the large number of poor and uneducated children he found here. The condition of these ragged children distressed him so much that he determined to seek means to provide them with a free school. In November of 1848 a meeting was called of a few public spirited citizens to consider the matter. This was, apparently, the first effort made in Oswego to provide education for those unable to pay tuition.

Money was provided by interested citizens, and Mr. Sheldon became the teacher of the "ragged school," as it was dubbed, in the fall of 1848. There were about one hundred twenty-five children who attended, many of whom had never been inside a schoolroom. It was as strange a school as had ever been assembled in Oswego.

After a time Mr. Sheldon urged that all public schools in the city be made free and that the twelve districts be brought under the control of a city Board of Education. Opinion was divided on the issue, some favoring the idea while others thought it was extravagant and unfair. Finally the legislature passed a law in 1853 providing that Oswego should have free schools. Credit for the passage of this law must go to Hon. D. C. Littlejohn, a member of the Assembly, and to Hon. R. C. Platt, in the Senate, both friends of the new educational movement.

Mr. Sheldon was asked to become the first superintendent of schools and immediately reorganized the schools from the primary grades through the High School. When the system was well under way, the private schools began to disappear and most of the pupils who had gone out of town to school stayed at home. This surely testifies to the worth of the public schools and to Mr. Sheldon's efforts.

Thus out of the humble "ragged school" came our local system of free public schools. The movement, filled with opposition and strife as it was, marks one of the noblest achievements of our citizens. If history remembers the early pioneers and business men of a community, no less should it forget the earnest men and women who aided the movement for free schools for all children in Oswego. In the story of his life, Mr. Sheldon mentions the names of Cheney Ames, Douglas Smith, a Mrs. Fisher, and Judge J. C. Churchill as his supporters. Doubtless there were many others whose names have been forgotten. Within a short time Oswego became famous as an educational place. Our next story tells of the further work of Mr. Sheldon in Oswego.

UNIT XIII

HOW A NEW KIND OF SCHOOL MADE OSWEGO FAMOUS

1. The Normal School Was an Outgrowth of the City Schools.

Mr. Sheldon had good success with the Oswego schools. He now gave up all his time to improve the training of children, and he loved his work. Although the schools he established were efficient, he was not satisfied with them.

"I realized," said Mr. Sheldon, "that our work was too formal, too much of a memorizing process. We wanted something that would wake up the pupils, set them to thinking, observing, reasoning."

In search of ideas he went to Toronto, Canada, where he received the inspiration for changes in the Oswego public schools. At once he introduced the new method into our schools which he called "objective teaching." Briefly, the plan provided for the use of collections of objects, pictures, charts of colors, reading charts, etc., that would make learning more real and give pupils an opportunity to think and talk about the things studied.

The new plan required teachers to be trained in its use and to this Mr. Sheldon devoted himself. Soon the teachers he had trained were called to other cities to introduce the new methods. Then it was that he received permission from the Board of Education to form a Training School to train the graduates of our High School for teaching primary grades. The Training School was established as a part of the regular school system and without expense to the city. Mr. Sheldon sent for a teacher from London, England, to teach the new methods. Some of the Oswego teachers contributed as much as half their salaries in order to pay the costs of bringing the London teacher here.

In the year that our country entered into its Civil War (1861), the London teacher arrived, and the Training Class became an established institution. It met in a room of a wooden school building that stood on West Fourth street near Bridge Street. The children in the school constituted the practice school.

The first training class had only nine students in it, but after school hours, the teachers in the public schools would meet to receive instruction in the new methods. Some people doubted the value of the new Training School, but soon the city schools were using the new methods and other places became interested. Educators from other states came to study the new system. Many claimed it was the best in the country.



OLD NORMAL SCHOOL WHICH WAS LOCATED AT
WEST SIXTH AND SENECA STREETS

At the end of the first year of the new school, its teacher returned to London, and Mr. Sheldon was made principal of it, as well as serving as the Superintendent of Schools. Realizing

the value of the training not only to teachers in Oswego but to those who came to study from other parts of the state, Mr. Sheldon, through our representatives, induced the Legislature to appropriate money to aid in the development of the Training School. Thus during the dark days of the Civil War, the City of Oswego was building an institution that in 1866 came into its own as a Normal School supported by money from the State of New York. Such men as D. C. Littlejohn, D. G. Fort, Benjamin Doolittle, and George B. Sloan gave their support in the Legislature over a period of years to secure the Normal School at Oswego.



OSWEGO STATE NORMAL SCHOOL

It is expected that this institution will be made a college in the near future.

Within a few years the Oswego school became so famous that the teachers from here were in great demand to introduce the methods elsewhere. Places like Boston, Detroit, Cleveland, and many other cities sent for the Oswego teachers. Its influence was particularly felt in western and southwestern states. When other Normal Schools were formed by the State, it was from the Oswego school that men and women were sent to help form their faculties. In 1869 Mr. Sheldon resigned his position

as Superintendent of the city schools to devote all his time to the Normal School.

Thus by its Training School, Oswego became famous and known throughout the United States. While its Normal School was not the first organized in the country, it was the first to use the objective method and to popularize it. The influence of our Normal School in the lives of boys and girls in our own country as well as in some foreign countries is incalculable. It is certain that it must have been great. Our Normal School still continues to send out men and women who dedicate their efforts for the benefit of children. Oswego, today, may well feel a happy pride in the fact that our predecessors gave encouragement and support to Mr. Sheldon in his excellent work with little children.

UNIT XIV

WHY LAKE COMMERCE DECLINED AT OSWEGO

1. Removal of Canal Tolls Marked the Decline of Much of Lake Ontario's Commerce.

Just about the period which we have been discussing, commerce at Oswego reached its high point. In the same year that Mr. Sheldon took charge of the new Training School, the revenues received from commerce reached the enormous figure of \$1,280,000. Only Buffalo surpassed this business on lake ports. Our harbor was a scene of great activity. Demands were constantly made for more room and deeper water. What has now become folk lore was then real facts. Sailing vessels crowded the little harbor so that at times it was possible to cross the river on the decks of vessels tied together. The Federal Government again realized the necessity of making improvements, and from 1871 to 1882 the enlargement of the harbor took place. The outlook for increased commerce was most promising.

The expected commerce, however, was not to come to Oswego. That iron-horse, the railroad, had by this time given serious competition to the state canals. At first the railroads

OSWEGO HARBOR ABOUT 1870

In the upper left corner may be seen the old city hall and post office now a ship chandlery store. On the right are grain elevators. Along the river bank lumber is piled, while on the flat cars may be seen iron rails, a large number of which passed through the port of Oswego.



carried only passengers, as tolls were placed on freight so that they would not take business from the canals. Before long the railroads were able to remove the tolls, and immediately much of the freight formerly shipped by canal boats now went by the faster rail routes across the state.

In order to meet this railroad competition, the state decided in 1874 to begin to reduce the tolls on the canals in the hope that freight would be shipped by the canals. Business did not pick up as much as it was expected, so the State decided to abolish the tolls altogether on the canals. That was in 1882. It was this act and this date that marked the beginning of the decline in the lake commerce which all the years before had found its way to Oswego and which had helped make it prosper.

But why did the removal of tolls on state canals work to the disadvantage of Oswego? To answer this question, we shall look at our map of New York and the Great Lakes. To make the question more real, let us say that you are the captain of a lake boat. Your business is to carry wheat from the western states where it grows to the East where it will be manufactured into flour. When you sail your vessel into Lake Erie, you have two methods of unloading your wheat. One is to sail into Buffalo harbor, where your cargo will be unloaded, ground into flour, and then sent across New York State in canal boats by the Erie Canal to Albany and thence to New York City. This route will require the payment of tolls all the way from Buffalo. (Trace the route on your map).

The other method is to sail past Buffalo, enter the Welland Canal where you must pay a toll, and then sail across Lake Ontario to Oswego harbor. Here the wheat can be ground and sent to New York by the Oswego Canal and the eastern half of the Erie Canal. By this route tolls will have to be paid only from Oswego to Albany instead of from Buffalo to Albany, a much longer toll route. (Trace this route).

There are fewer tolls to be paid by the Oswego route, counting the Welland Canal toll, than there are by the Buffalo-Erie Canal route. Which way will you choose?



Then the year 1882 comes. Tolls are removed from all New York State canals. What does this mean to you as a lake captain? It means that it will be cheaper for you to sail into the harbor at Buffalo, have your wheat ground there, and sent by the Erie Canal toll-free to Albany. For while tolls were removed from the Erie and Oswego Canals, they were not removed from the Welland Canal as our laws did not apply there. From then on you gave up sailing to Oswego and brought your ship into Buffalo. That is exactly what many other ship captains did, and that is why most of the wheat went through Buffalo after this period. Thus Buffalo became a great milling center, and the importance of Oswego as a milling place began to diminish.

Still other causes brought about a decline in Oswego commerce. For a long time Oswego had been the shipping place for salt made at Syracuse and sent to Canada and western markets. The development of new salt regions in Michigan made possible cheaper production of salt. So the industry gradually died at Syracuse and, of course, Oswego lost the trade.

Oswego also had been the great receiving place for Canadian lumber. For ten years after the close of the Civil War, Oswego handled more lumber than any other lake port. Old prints today show great piles of lumber lining any available space in the harbor. It was the lumber business which constantly required more room in the harbor development. Then the time came when the Canadian areas which sent lumber through Oswego were cleared of trees, and lumber from other areas was shipped by train, so that gradually the lumber business was lost to Oswego. Other minor causes contributed to keep commerce away from our port, but the ones just mentioned were the fundamental causes.

Thus the high point of lake business through Oswego seems to have been between the years 1868 and 1874. During that time the government received annually over a million dollars in revenues, after which they steadily declined. It is interesting to note that the United States has collected in these duties at least seven dollars for every dollar spent on the development and maintenance of Oswego Harbor.

UNIT XV.

HOW OSWEGO DEVELOPED INDUSTRIALLY

1. Oswego Changed from a Commercial to an Industrial City.

The story of Oswego's industry may be said to have begun with the milling of flour. From 1830 on it was one of the leading industries until commerce declined. In 1842 was founded the great milling firm of Penfield, Lyon, and Company, which for nearly fifty years conducted a large business. During the period between 1850 and 1870, many large grain elevators were built, primarily for handling western grain brought to Oswego by the lakes and the Welland Canal.

The making of starch then carried the community on to greater industrial importance. At its peak, the Oswego Starch Factory manufactured about twenty-five million pounds of corn starch a year.

Shipbuilding was another of Oswego's early industries. It was from one of its shipyards owned by Sylvester Doolittle that the first lake boat to use a screw propellor was launched. That was in 1841, and it was of great importance to steam navigation on the Great Lakes. The following year Alvin Bronson and his partner built several of the propeller boats which made regular trips to Chicago and back. Their vessels proved popular for it enabled lake vessels to go through the Welland Canal which was impossible for the side-wheel steamers.

The beginning of the iron and steel industry was brought about by shipbuilding activities. Thus machine shops and boiler works had their origin in supplying the equipment and repairing ships built at this port. The milling industry also called for machinery. In 1848 the Vulcan Iron Works was established, which continued in business until 1895, when the plant was burned. In 1853 the Ames Iron Works was founded, an industry which soon became one of the leading engine and boiler manufacturing in the country. Other industries such as woolen factories,

yarn and knitting mills, and cotton manufactories were also established.

With the decline of commerce, it became necessary to give attention more and more to the industrial development of the city. During the last decade of the last century, enterprising men determined that the great advantages possessed by the place for the establishment of manufactories should be made known to the world. It was then that the Diamond Match Company established one of its plants here. Upon the basis of the iron and steel industry developed earlier, came other metal trades such as the Fitzgibbons Boiler Company and the Oil Well Supply Company. Railway repair shops carried on an important business until the shops were removed recently.

In the textile trade, window shades, shade cloth, as well as yarn and knit goods, modern industry carries on in Oswego. One of the comparatively new industries of the city is that of the manufacture of Rayon, which is an artificial silk. The making of paper bags for cement has also brought the largest bag factory in the country to Oswego. The Bates Valve Bag Corporation which manufactures machinery to fill bags, and the Oswego Board Corporation, which makes a wall board, also are new industries recently located here. The manufacture of candy, chocolate, and cocoa has for some years furnished steady employment to many workers.

Of considerable interest over a long period of time has been the potential water power available at Oswego. The steady flow of water down the Oswego River has long been used to furnish cheap power to Oswego's industries. For the development of electric power, two hydro-electric plants have been constructed recently and today are owned by the Niagara-Hudson Power Company. The electricity used to light our city comes from the plants and much of the power is sent out of the city by means of wires.

Thus while Oswego has suffered reverses in its commercial life, the industries established here have enabled the community



ONE OSWEGO INDUSTRY
A HYDRO-ELECTRIC PLANT ON THE VARICK CANAL

to look forward with interest to future development. And not the least, by any means, is the expectation that commerce will again aid in the future development of Oswego's industrial life.

UNIT XVI

HOW NEW CONVENIENCES MADE LIFE MORE PLEASANT AT OSWEGO

1. Gas, Electricity and Running Water were Welcomed by the People.

Today we have so many conveniences that sometimes we may think they always existed. Our grandparents did not know of many of the devices we use now. In the acceptance of new inventions and devices to make life more pleasant, Oswego stood in the foreground.

One of the first devices that early attracted the attention of the citizens was gas for lighting purposes. Before its use the general method of lighting houses and streets at night was by oil lamps. In March of 1852, the newspapers brought the news that they were "happy to inform our citizens that a plan is on foot to light our city with gas." Within a short time the use of gas was quite general and with it came amusing instances of its use. One story concerned a man who was engaged at his office well into the night. When he was ready to leave, he simply blew out the light just as he had been in the habit of doing with the oil lamp. The next morning when he returned he noticed a "strong smell very much resembling that of gas." Serious accidents must have occurred in the use of the new product, for the newspapers felt it necessary to warn the people about the necessity of its careful use.

It was not until after Civil War days (1867) that the convenience of running water came into homes. "Water, Water, Everywhere," read the newspapers upon its introduction. In domestic use and fire fighting, its coming may be regarded as one

of the most important. It made possible the construction of indoor bathrooms, which alone was a blessing to the people.

2. Electricity Made Possible Several New Conveniences.

Then came the mysterious agent known as electricity. Its use was early applied to the telegraph, and about 1880 the telephone was brought to Oswego. At first very much of a novelty and thought by many to be a fad, it soon became an important means of communication for business concerns. Gradually it was installed in private houses, and to this day it forms a necessary part of our daily existence.

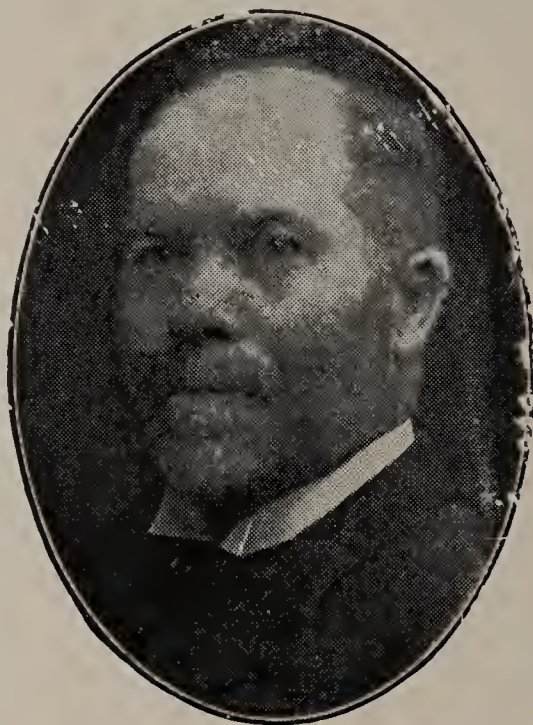
Within a very few years (1886), electricity was applied for lighting purposes. Just as the gas replaced oil lamps, now came electricity to take the place of gas. With gas went the quaint lamp-lighter, whose job it was to visit each lamp-post and turn on and off the lights.

Just before this time (1885), the first street car made its appearance on the streets of Oswego. And what a curious conveyance! It was drawn by a horse and the driver acted as conductor. On the day the horse cars began operation, Barnum's circus was in town. Two such attractions were irresistible to the youngsters of the city, for they all wanted to ride the new cars, to say nothing of going to the circus. The day was a trying one for the poor car conductor. Boys swarmed around the cars like bees and jumped aboard the moment the driver's back was turned. The papers the next day said that the new cars "did a rattling business." For five years the quaint horse cars served the public and then the newly acquired electricity was substituted for horses. Trolley cars immediately became very popular and the rides along the lake shore and the Oswego River are pleasantly remembered today. Later the trolley connected Syracuse and Oswego, and after long service the line was discontinued in 1930. A few years earlier the street car in the city gave way to the motor bus.

After about 1880, bicycles were a popular means of getting around town. Now you seldom see a man or woman riding on a bicycle. But thirty-five years ago or more, the use of the

"bike" was common. On Sundays and holidays many people went on bicycle trips to nearby places. Often picnics were taken in this manner, and always the fairs featured their bicycle races.

Of unusual interest on the dirt streets of Oswego was the first automobile—the "horseless carriage." It is said that the first automobile here made its appearance in the spring of 1900, and



MARTIN O'MELIA

SAID TO BE THE OWNER OF THE FIRST
AUTOMOBILE DRIVEN IN OSWEGO

that it was owned by Martin O'Melia. Compared with our modern automobiles, it was more curious than the horse cars. Mr. O'Melia's car was such a curiosity that he was invited to exhibit it at a celebration then being held in Ogdensburg. Here many Canadians were in attendance, and they marveled at the Yankee invention. When Mr. O'Melia rode from Syracuse to Oswego in two hours and fifteen minutes, it was real news for the local

papers, and the event caused much speculation as to the possibilities of the new conveyance.

When the first automobiles came, there were no such things as garages and gasoline stations. When repair work was needed, it was necessary to look up the blacksmith or carriage maker. Gradually automobiles replaced horses, and the business of the smithy fell off. Stables, of which there were many, began to disappear so that today we find very few.



THE FORERUNNER OF THE MODERN AUTO TRUCK. AN
EARLY AUTOMOBILE BEING USED TO CARRY HAY

Another invention that was made possible by electricity was the radio. The development of this wonderful device is a part of our own times, and your parents can well remember its origin.

The conveniences of the library must not go unnoticed. It was established in 1855 through the generosity of Mr. Gerrit Smith, who gave \$25,000 for the construction of the building which we still use to this day. While not a resident of Oswego,



LAKE BOATS OF TODAY. THE VESSEL NEAR THE ELEVATOR
IS UNLOADING GRAIN; ANOTHER UNLOADS COAL;
THE VESSEL IN THE FOREGROUND UNLOADS CEMENT

Mr. Smith owned much property around the harbor, and the wealth derived from it was returned in part by his grant to the library. Gerrit Smith may also be remembered by Oswegonians as an ardent abolitionist, who worked unceasingly for the freedom of negro slaves. His portrait hangs in the Oswego Library.

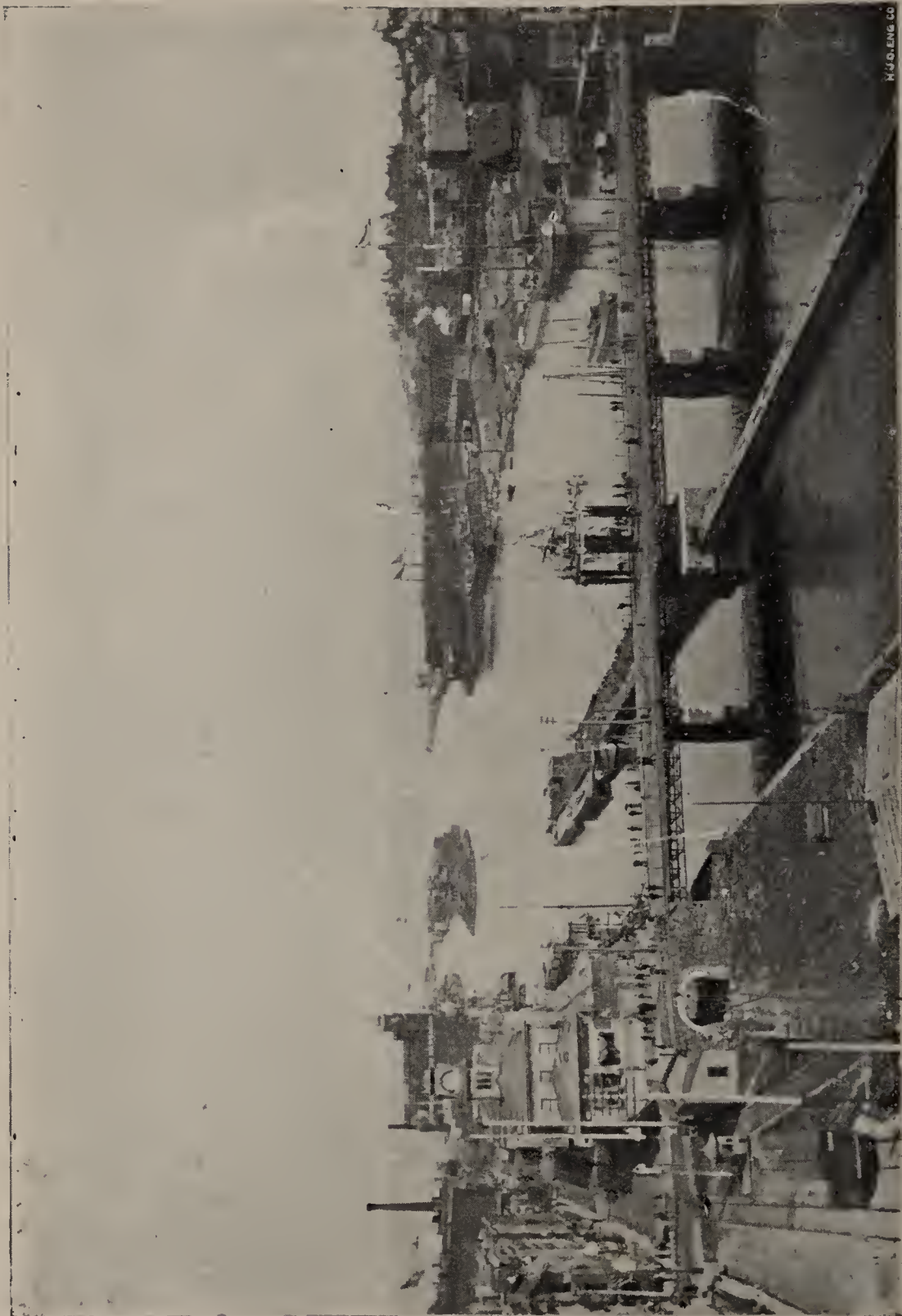
Still another useful institution to our city which must not be overlooked is the hospital. Organized at first in 1881 in the Eagle House on West Second Street, it was a modest affair of only six beds. Three years later a building was constructed at West Fourth and Schuyler Streets, which served the people until 1908, when the present hospital was acquired. One of the real assets of the city, the hospital continues to be appreciated more and more by those who require medical treatment.

3. Amusements of the People.

Because of its location on the lake and river, the people of Oswego have for a long time enjoyed the means of recreation afforded in water sports and fishing. During the past century, yachting was a favored sport for those who could afford it.

A center of social life was the Academy of Music, which was opened in a building on the northeast corner of Water and Market Streets in 1875. It was owned by the D. L. & W. Railroad Company. Upon its stage came many celebrated actors and actresses, whose names fill the hall of fame in the theatre of the past century. Shakespeare's plays, operas, minstrels, lectures, bands, and modern plays of the time were all to be heard and seen at the old Academy. Later such actors as Booth, Mantell, Sothern, not to mention a host of others, performed behind its foot lights.

In the first quarter of the present century basketball as well as football came into prominence in Oswego. Long a place of interest in basketball, the youth of the city continue to show unusual prowess in this sport. Cricket, baseball, as well as other outdoor sports, have also interested our young people.



OSWEGO HARBOR ABOUT 1900



A GRAIN BOAT OF FIFTY YEARS AGO

UNIT XVII

WHY OSWEGO LOOKS TO THE FUTURE WITH INTEREST

Oswego's future, like its past, depends to a large extent upon water commerce that is expected through trade upon the Great Lakes. Following commerce comes industry, and it is to both of these factors that Oswego looks ahead with interest.

From earliest times Oswego was a place of importance because of its location on the water highway to the interior from the sea coast. It was here that New York colony's most westerly fur trade was carried on with the Indians. It was here that the United States government opened its first port on the Great Lakes. Through the early port passed cargoes from the West and manufactured goods from the East. The building of canals

gave an added impetus to the importance of Oswego. Changes have taken place in the means and instruments of transportation, but the fundamentals of the movement of goods still warrant the expectation that our location on the great inland seas will attract a greater and greater commerce as time goes on.

It is felt that the port is destined to become one of the principal transfer points of commodities moving from East to West and West to East. The recent opening of the enlarged Welland Canal has already made possible the coming to Oswego of the great upper lake grain boats. Returns in revenue and employment may be expected from this water transportation by lake and canal. In addition shipments of goods, raw materials, as well as finished products from Europe and lower Canada by way of the St. Lawrence River will find their way to Oswego. Once the greatest lumber transfer port on the lakes, Oswego may again become a distributing point for places inland in lumber and natural wood products.

It is not to be thought, however, that shipments and their transfers at Oswego will in themselves make the port and city greater in importance. Industry will seek a location where raw materials may be assembled more easily and at lower cost. Oswego affords such a location. From a transfer port, Oswego may be expected logically to become an industrial point, bringing increased employment and increased population.

Recently Oswego has become a point for the manufacture and distribution of hydro-electric power through use of the fall of the Oswego River in its last half-dozen miles, and through concentration of power developed in the eastern end of Oswego County and transmitted to Oswego for use or distribution. Low cost electric energy is one of the main elements governing location of industry, and low cost power, low cost transportation, and splendid distribution facilities, by canal, railroads, and a network of improved trunk line highways provide essential facilities for successful industry.

Both by water and rail, Oswego's location is one which commands the attention of shippers today. It now affords, for

great lake boats, the nearest port to the metropolis of the east. By canal Oswego is only 338 miles from New York while the distance from Buffalo to New York is 507 miles. Oswego is 193 miles from Albany while Buffalo is 362 miles. The rail distance from Oswego to New York is 315 miles while from Buffalo to New York it is 439 miles. Oswego is distant from Boston, by rail, 363 miles and Buffalo 490 miles. The Interstate Commerce Commission in a basic rate case, established in recent years a differential, decreeing that on grain and grain products, rail movements from Oswego to North Atlantic ports shall be 1.5 cents per 100 lbs., under the rate from Buffalo, materially advancing opportunities for Oswego to secure a large volume of this bulk business.

In the past three years, following improvement of the harbor by the United States Government, tonnages have been annually increasing. Differentials on bituminous coal shipments to Oswego have brought this tonnage up to more than 200,000 tons, while anthracite coal shipments, which had almost vanished, have in a measure returned although below shipment of years ago. Grain shipments have increased, and other bulk commodities, likewise. Combined lake and canal tonnages in the present year, 1934, will exceed 900,000 tons in all commodities handled, and the year 1935 is expected to bring total tonnage in shipments to more than 1,000,000 tons. In short Oswego has much in its favor in looking to the future.*

*The above facts were furnished through the courtesy of Mr. John M. Gill.

UNIT XVIII.

OLD HOMES OF OSWEGO

As a matter of record and for those who are interested, a brief description of old Oswego homes are given. It must be left to the imagination to picture the early log houses which first characterized the means of shelter for early pioneers in this vicinity. As a thriving village and later as a growing city, sub-

stantial homes were constructed here. It is the purpose of this chapter to list some of these homes giving their location, their builders, and as far as possible the approximate date of their construction.

On the northeast corner of East Sixth and Mohawk Streets is an old stone house now owned by Mr. George Farrell. This was built by one of the most prominent men in the village, Mr. George H. McWhorter, in 1827. It is probably the oldest house on the East side which remains as it was originally built.

The stone house on the southeast corner of East Seventh and Mohawk Streets, according to most sources, was built by Milton Harmon in the early 1830's. This is known, sometimes, as the Tucker house, because a family of that name lived there at one time.

On the south side of East Oneida Street, between Second and Third Streets, (next to the Evangelist Church), is an old house built by James Brown. Mr. Brown was an Englishman who practiced law in Oswego and was an ardent abolitionist. This house was used as a "station" in the "underground railroad," slaves being brought there and at times concealed in a closet in the house before being sent to Canada.*

Peter D. Hugunin, a member of one of the first families to settle here, is said to have built the house at 33 East Fourth Street, in 1827. This house is supposed to have been the only one to escape the fire which destroyed all that part of Oswego through the action of the women of the family in putting wet rugs and carpets on the roof, the house was protected from the sparks.

At 121 East Third Street is a stone house known as the Simeon Bates home. Mr. Bates was a prominent citizen, active in the business and civic life of Oswego when it was a village and young city. The house was probably built in the late 1830's or early 1840's.

*This house was bought by Mr. O. J. Harmon, from Mr. Brown's estate. The information about the "underground railroad" was obtained from a descendant of Mr. Harmon.

The old stone house on the southeast corner of East Third and Oneida Streets was built by Ambrose Morgan about the year 1832.

The Hon. George B. Sloan was born in the house at 17 East Fifth Street, which was built by his father, James Sloan, in 1828. This house has been changed somewhat but is one of the oldest still standing on the East side.

Another house, connected with the "underground railroad" and known as the Littlefield house, is on the southwest corner of East Fourth and Oneida Streets. It is not known exactly when this house was built but it was probably before 1850, although it has been remodeled since then.*

An interesting house on the East side, of a later period, is the Theodore Irwin home on the south side of East Utica street between Fifth and Sixth Streets. This was built during the Civil War, and here Mr. Irwin had his famous collection of manuscripts and books.

On the southwest corner of West Third and Cayuga Streets is a stone house built in 1826 by Jacob I. Fort, a leading citizen of the early days. This has been remodeled and a brick addition added to it.**

Two houses are associated with the Bunner family. One is at 26 West Cayuga Street, southeast corner of West Second and Cayuga Streets. This has been stuccoed over the original frame building. Some sources give Captain John Trowbridge as the builder of this house and the date of its building as 1819. The timbers in it are said to be fastened together by big wooden pegs. Rudolph Bunner lived in this house before building the stone house at 15 Bronson Street, now the residence of Mr. F. A. Emerick. Mr. Bunner built the stone house about 1830. At that time it was outside the village limits.

*Information about the use of this house in the "underground railroad" was received by Miss Gertrude Shepherd from Mr. John B. Edwards, Gerrit Smith's agent in Oswego, who was a "conductor" here in the "underground railroad."

**A sketch of this house as it was originally is in the possession of Mr. Fort's granddaughter, Miss Katherine Casey.

At 47 West Second Street is an old stone house built and occupied by Matthew McNair, one of the earliest settlers in Oswego. The date when this house was built is not known but it is supposed that it was in the early 1830's, if not before.

The small stone house at 45 West Third Street is said to have been constructed of the stone blasted from the rocks in making its cellar. It was built, probably, by Captain Archer in 1829. One source only gives Henry Hugunin as the builder in 1831.

On the southwest corner of West Third and Schuyler Streets is a large stone house built by Captain Elias Trowbridge, a merchant engaged in the East India trade, who came to Oswego from New Haven, Conn. It was probably built in the period 1830-35, possibly earlier. A story is told of this house that when the Trowbridges lived there they occasionally had Indian callers, who came in quietly at night and settled down to sleep before the fireplace. When the family came downstairs in the morning, the Indians would be gone.

Alvin Bronson built his stone house on the southeast corner of West Fifth and Cayuga Streets about 1836. His cottage had occupied this property and was moved to West Eighth and Cayuga Streets where it still stands.

Mr. Richard L. De Zeng, who had charge of the construction of the Varick canal, built the stone house on the southwest corner of West Fifth and Seneca Streets in 1834.

The house now owned and occupied by Mr. E. B. Mott, on the southwest corner of West Fifth and Schuyler Streets, was built in 1834 by Mr. J. N. Bonesteel.

On the northwest corner of West Fourth and Seneca Streets is a house said to have been built in 1820, but by whom is not known. The Oliver family bought the house in 1853. Colonel Robert Oliver, during the Civil War, sent slaves North, and they were concealed in this house on their way to Canada. It is said that there was a passage leading from this house to the river. There is some evidence of its existence in the cellar to this day.*

*Information as to the date of building and use in the "underground railroad" was obtained from a member of the Oliver family.

Mr. Stephen H. Lathrop built the stone house on the northwest corner of West Eighth and VanBuren Streets in the 1840's. This is still the residence of a member of the Lathrop family.

Later houses on the West side typical of the prosperous city era are the Myron Pardee house, 8 Montcalm Street, built in 1848; the house built by Luther Wright, at 40 West Sixth Street in 1854; the Samuel B. Johnson home at 130 West Fifth Street and the Joel Penfield home, 124 West Fifth Street.



CARRINGTON CASTLE

Built by F. T. Carrington, this home was one of the fine residences of Oswego over a quarter century ago. Today the building is known as Castle School.

Two buildings said to be the only public ones built before 1828 still in existence are the old stone house just outside the old

fort, which was built by the government in 1821 for the light-house keeper's home, and the court house built in 1822, which was moved and now forms the chapel of the Evangelist Church.

Before the present City Hall was erected the building on the east side of Water Street, between Bridge and Market Streets, was used as the City Hall, Post Office, and Police Station. Before that time (1848) it was used as the Village Hall and was called the Market house. The Board of Trade also met here. It is still possible to see the words "Post Office" and "Board of Trade" over two of the entrances. This Market House was built in 1835, according to village records, the third story and cupola being added to it in 1836.

UNIT XIX

ORIGIN OF SOME STREET NAMES

The early streets of Oswego were named by Simeon DeWitt, state surveyor, under whose direction the village had been laid out in 1797. Many of them were celestial names and these were changed in 1837 as follows:

Aries became Schuyler.
Taurus became Seneca
Gemini became Cayuga.
Cancer became Bridge.
Leo became Oneida
Virgo became Mohawk.
Libra became Utica.
Scorpio became Albany

Sagittarius became Erie.
Capricornus became Niagara.
Aquarius became Ohio.
Lyra became VanBuren.
Aquila became Mitchell.
Orion became Mercer.
Auriga became DeWitt.

It is easy to recognize the origin of some of the names of our streets. Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, Mohawk, Erie, Niagara, and Ohio, are Indian names. Bridge, Canal, Front, Lake, Market, Ontario, Water, State Road, East and West Roads are obvious. Utica, Syracuse, and Albany were named for those cities in our State, but, of course, their origin dates to Phoenician, Roman, and English history.

Some of our streets are named for men famous in American history who had some connection with Oswego in its early days. These are:

DeWitt—Simeon DeWitt, the surveyor-general of New York State, who named the early streets and laid out the village.

Hamilton, Lawrence, Church—for Alexander Hamilton, John Lawrence, and John B. Church, joint owners of the Hamilton Tract, commonly known as "Hamilton's Gore."

Mercer—Colonel Mercer, in command of Oswego in 1755-56. Killed in action in 1756, while defending Oswego against the French under General Montcalm.

Montcalm—General Montcalm.

Schuyler—Colonel Schuyler, commander of old Fort George.

VanBuren—for the VanBuren family, owners of the VanBuren Tract.

Mitchell—Colonel Mitchell, sent to Oswego in 1814, from Sacket's Harbor, to protect the military stores against the attack of the British.

Franklin—Benjamin Franklin.

Still others are named for old families and residents of Oswego, some of them being:

Babcock—Leander Babcock, prominent lawyer and congressman in Oswego. Married to a daughter of Alvin Bronson.

Bronson—Alvin Bronson, the first leading citizen of the village.

Bunner—Rudolph Bunner, a man of wealth and prominence in Oswego in 1825-1833. Served in Congress in 1827-29.

Burckle—E. R. Burckle, an early resident and prominent man.

Burt—Probably for the Daniel Burt family.

Cochran—Major James Cochran, who came to Oswego in 1825. Married to a daughter of General Philip Schuyler, who was a god-daughter of George Washington.

Conway Terrace—Former Mayor Daniel Conway.

Dorcas—Dorcas Beardsley Lathrop (Mrs. Stephen Lathrop)

Duer—William Duer, assemblyman and congressman from Oswego.

Ellen—for a daughter of Alvin Bronson.

Hall Road—A man named Hall, owner of property in the vicinity of the road.

Gerrit—Gerrit Smith.

Herrick—Probably for Dwight Herrick, a prominent citizen from 1827 on.

Judson—David H. Judson, a prominent resident of the East side.

Lathrop—Stephen H. Lathrop, prominent citizen and large property owner.

Ludlow—Judge Samuel B. Ludlow. Owner of the property where St. Francis' Home stands, part of the Home being his house.

Lyon—John E. Lyon, prominent early citizen residing on the East side.

McWhorter—George H. McWhorter, an early leading citizen. Village president, collector of the port, etc. Married a daughter of John Lawrence.

Murray—Hamilton Murray, prominent New Yorker, owner of a large amount of property in Oswego, coming here to live in 1846. His home was on the West River Road, now the home of Leonard Johnson, drowned on the Villa de Homedin.

Scriba—George Frederick William Augustus Scriba, owner of the enormous Scriba Patent.

Sheldon—Dr. Edward A. Sheldon, founder and principal of the Normal School.

Turrill—Joel Turrill, early resident, prominent in public affairs in the village, congressman in 1833-37. Sent as United States consul to the Sandwich Islands, now the Hawaiian Islands.

Varick—Abram Varick, a wealthy New Yorker, with large business interests here, notably water power. Builder of the Varick Canal.

Yates—Rudolph Bunner's son-in-law.

UNIT XX

THUMBNAIL BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF A FEW OSWEGO
CITIZENS OF THE PAST

Significant in the history of Oswego is Neil McMullin, the first settler, who came to Oswego in 1796, from Kingston, N. Y., bringing a frame building with him for his family to live in. The McMullin family came immediately after the British surrendered Fort Ontario, and theirs was the first frame house in the place. Mr. McMullin opened trade with the Indians, which was the only trade possible at that time. The location of his house was in West Seneca Street, between First Street and the river.

Matthew McNair was born in Paisley, Scotland. He came to Oswego from Canada in 1802. He gave lake commerce its inception at Oswego in that year by purchasing a sloop and beginning the forwarding business, later becoming a considerable builder and owner of vessels. Mr. McNair was always an active and prominent man in the community, being a town supervisor from 1825 to 1830, village trustee in 1830, and president of the village in 1832. He died in California in 1880.

Daniel Burt, of Orange County, N. Y., came to Oswego in 1800 as a visitor. He moved here in 1803 with his sons, Joel, George W. and Daniel, Jr. His son Bradner came earlier that same year. The Burt family became one of the most prominent in the city. Bradner erected the first saw mill in the village. Joel operated the first ferry and was appointed the first collector of customs in 1803. He is thought to have been the first United States civil officer of any kind in Oswego. Bradley B. Burt, a grandson of Daniel, was one of the leading attorneys of early Oswego.

Daniel Hugunin came to Oswego in 1805 with his family of six sons and four daughters. He was of French extraction but had been brought up among the Dutch of the Mohawk Valley. The Hugunin family was long and prominently known in the early history of Oswego and exerted a strong influence over the infant city. Mr. Hugunin, with the help of Bradner Burt, built

a small frame store the year he came to Oswego. It was the first in the place and was located on West First Street between Cayuga and Seneca Streets. He was the first congressman from this county, being elected in 1824.

Alvin Bronson at the age of 27 years, arrived in Oswego from Waterbury, Conn., in 1810, as the representative of Townsend, Bronson & Co. He immediately constructed a schooner and began the forwarding and mercantile business. Mr. Bronson occupied the foremost position in the commercial and public life of the village and county, being elected the first village president in 1828, and the first president of the Board of Trade in 1848. He was elected to the State Senate in 1821 and was extremely active in affairs of the canal and prominently identified with procuring the treaty of reciprocity with Great Britain. He died April 2, 1881 at the age of 98 years.

Sylvester Doolittle was born in Whitestown, Oneida County in 1800, and came to Oswego in 1836, through the influence of Abram Varick. He had been engaged in building boats for the canal trade previous to this, having built in Rochester in 1822, the first boat to go through the canal to New York—the "Genesee of Wheatland." Mr. Doolittle had a shipyard in Oswego and did much to advance the lake trade and carrying capacity of the boats. Through Captain Van Cleve he became interested in the Ericsson propellor and in 1841 built at Oswego the "Vandalia," the first lake boat to use this propellor. He also built one of the early large mills and made improvements in handling grain and making flour. He died in 1881.

Samuel Burbank Johnson was born at Fort Edward, N. Y., in 1816 and came to Oswego in 1836. He was an influential figure in the milling business, being an active member of the firm of Penfield, Lyon & Co. He invented what is known as a "mid-lings purifier," used in the process of manufacturing flour. Mr. Johnson was a public spirited man, serving as a village trustee and being interested in developing and furthering charitable and educational enterprises. He died in 1891.

George Goble was born in Ireland in 1819 and died in Oswego in 1906. He came to Oswego in 1837 and entered the shipbuilding business, becoming a leader in this industry on Lake Ontario. He owned the Goble Shipyard and Drydock, which was well known throughout the Great Lakes, and contributed to the lake commerce of Oswego, always an important part of its development. Mr. Goble was a public spirited citizen and interested in the growth and welfare of the city.

Cheney Ames was born in Mexico, June 1808, and removed to Oswego in 1837. He raised money to improve the road from Oswego to Scriba; obtained from the legislature an act to repeal the charter of the toll bridge; was influential in securing the charter for the city; and engineered the work of deepening the main channel of the river in front of the elevators. He was elected to the Senate in 1858 and in 1864. He served on the Civil War committee. Mr. Ames secured the charter for the State Normal School. He imported the first logs to Oswego from Canada; was interested in the first knitting factory; was a prime mover in establishing the railroads to Oswego; was in the grain business with George B. Sloan and was postmaster in 1849 and 1876.

Thomas Kingsford was born in England in 1796 and died in Oswego in 1869. He was employed in the starch factory of William Colgate & Co., in New Jersey and while working there discovered the principle of making starch from Indian meal. The demand for this product was so great that he left the Colgate company to enter business for himself. He formed the firm of T. Kingsford & Son and built a small factory at Bergen, N. J. Business men from Auburn became interested in his discovery and offered capital to provide for the growing needs of the new business. In looking about for a site where the raw material—Indian corn—would be more accessible, pure water abundant and shipping facilities ample, Oswego was found to meet all these requirements and the firm was moved here in 1848. This was an important event in the history of Oswego. The name Kingsford and Oswego Starch became known the world over. The

factory employed hundreds of men and meant an increase in population and wealth to the community.

George Beale Sloan was born in Oswego, June 20, 1831, and died here in 1904. Mr. Sloan was one of the most distinguished and prominent citizens Oswego ever had. His business interests were wide, the outstanding one probably being the grain and commission firm of Irwin & Sloan. He was progressive and interested in everything pertaining to the growth and development of Oswego. He contributed generously to the city's charitable institutions. Mr. Sloan was a vestryman and warden of Christ Church and probably its most generous benefactor. He held many public offices, being an alderman, a member of Assembly for several terms, and later elected to the Senate, where he served for three terms.

Theodore Irwin was born in Sodus, Wayne County, in May 1826 and died in Oswego in 1902. He came to Oswego at the age of 17 years as a clerk for the firm of Doolittle & Mollison. He became one of Oswego's most prominent business men, being a member of the firm of Irwin & Sloan, grain and commission merchants, besides having many other commercial interests. Mr. Irwin was a collector of note, owning one of the finest private libraries in the country. In this library were many famous books, among which were a Gutenberg Old Testament; a copy of Eliot's Indian Bible, first edition, the only copy known complete in every particular; the "Golden Gospels," written about the year 780 in uncial letters of gold upon purple vellum—a priceless manuscript; a first folio of Shakespeare; and other valuable books and manuscripts which space does not permit mentioning. Shortly before his death Mr. Irwin disposed of the most famous of his books, most of the bibles going to J. P. Morgan although one famous one of many volumes profusely illustrated was sold to the Huntington Library in Pasadena, California. About six thousand volumes are still in the collection, the property of Mr. Irwin's granddaughter.

Edward Austin Sheldon was born in Genesee County, N. Y. in 1823. He intended to fit himself for the bar, but when his

health failed in college he came to Oswego to enter the nursery business. By accident he became interested in the poor and orphaned children of Oswego, of which there were said to be 2500 running the streets with no schooling. He founded and taught the "Orphan and Free School Association" and from this went to the city schools, reorganizing the old village school system and becoming the first superintendent of the city schools. He founded the Oswego State Normal School, the first of its kind, and through his progressive work became known as one of the foremost educators of his day. Because of Dr. Sheldon's work the Oswego State Normal School became famous as an educational institute throughout the world. He died in 1897.

Dr. Mary Edwards Walker was born in 1832 at the family home, Bunker Hill, in Fruit Valley, N. Y. and died there in 1919. A graduate of Syracuse Medical College in 1855, she was an assistant army surgeon in the Civil War, being the first woman to hold such a commission. For her bravery and services on the field Congress awarded her a medal, which she always wore. She was a fanatic on the subject of woman's dress reform and received permission from Congress to wear male attire. She was arrested many times for appearing in men's clothing but always carried her authority to do so with her, which she would proudly display and be instantly released. Dr. Walker was an advocate of woman's suffrage and did much for the cause in the United States and England. She claimed to have been the first woman to attempt to vote at the polls. Always an interesting figure for the newspapers, her reputation was international.

A personality whose impression made a lasting effect in Oswego was that of the Very Reverend Dean M. Barry former pastor of St. Paul's Church. Born in Ireland and taken to Canada as a youth, he was ordained to the priesthood in Montreal. After serving several years as pastor at Carthage, N. Y., Father Barry came to Oswego in 1869. For nearly fifty years he faithfully served his parish. His zeal in the cause of religion was matched by an intense devotion to the cause of temperance; he gave support to education both secular and religious; he

was a leader in many beneficial civic projects one of which was the municipal water works which he strongly advocated for several years. Complementing this was the lake water extension, another improvement close to his heart which he championed vigorously.

Willard Dickerman Straight was born in Oswego in 1880 and died in 1918. He graduated from Cornell in 1901. From 1902 to 1914 he was a resident principally in China and Korea, being connected with the Chinese Customs Service; correspondent of Reuter's Agency and the Associated Press; American Vice-Consul at Seoul; Consul-General at Mukden and representative in China for a group of notable American financiers. In 1908-09 he had been at Washington, as acting chief of the Division of Far Eastern Affairs in the Department of State. After his return from China (1914) he was for a time connected with J. P. Morgan & Co., of New York, but in 1915 withdrew from that firm to study international law at Columbia University. In 1909 he was elected a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society of London and in 1914 became President of the American Asiatic Association. In 1915 he became vice-president of the American International Corporation, formed to develop foreign trade of the United States. He married a daughter of William C. Whitney.

UNIT XXI

SOME HISTORIC RELICS TO BE SEEN IN OSWEGO

Early French Map—

In the City Library is an interesting original parchment map of Oswego which has never been published. It was made by M. Chaussegros de Lery, August 14, 1756, and was found in the garret of the old de Lery house at Boucherville near Montreal.

Also at the Library is an old swivel gun of 1 5-8 inch caliber for a half-pound ball. It was lost from an English sloop-of-war in Oswego harbor in 1756 probably during the French attack. It was found in the river off the foot of West Seneca

Street on September 6, 1893. The inscription upon it indicates that it was loaned to the Fortnightly Club on September 29, 1913, by William P. Judson.

Captain Van Cleve's Scrapbook—

In the City Clerk's office is a valuable scrapbook compiled by Captain James Van Cleve, a lake captain and former resident of Oswego. It was Captain Van Cleve who made the sketch of the Van Dalia in 1841, the first propellor boat on the Great Lakes, a cut of which appears elsewhere in this edition.

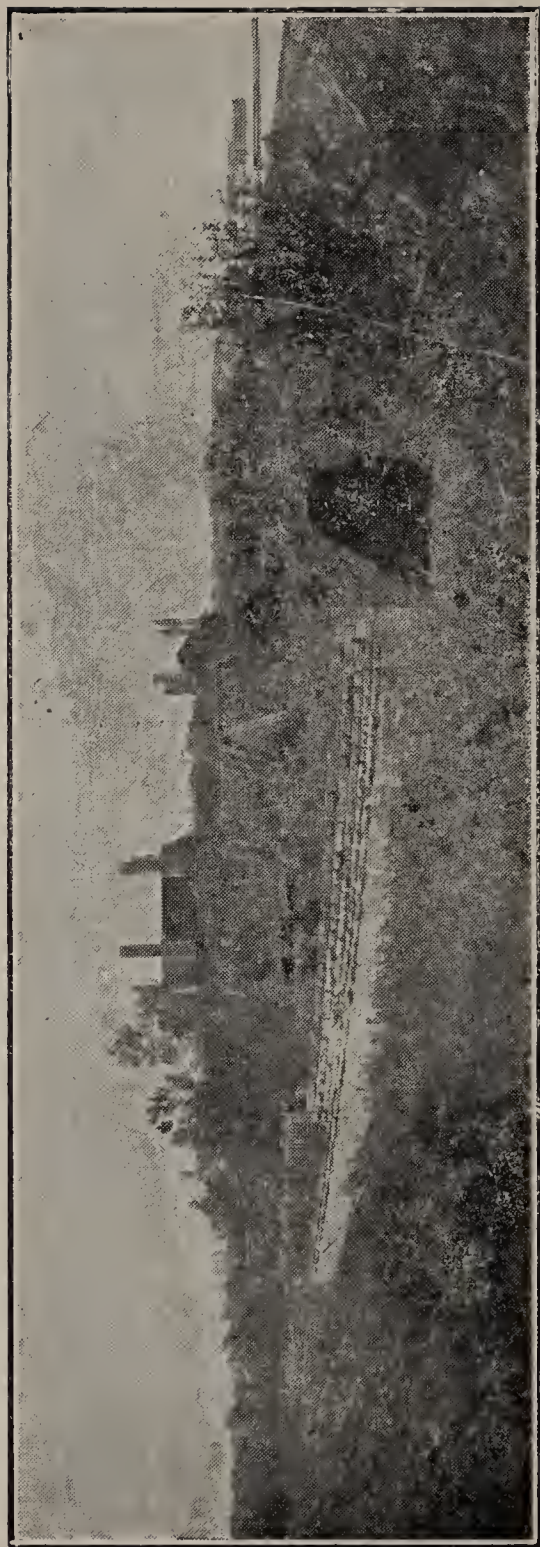
The book is one of maritime reminiscences. It includes French vessels, early English vessels and steamboats, early American sailing vessels, steamboats and propellers, and miscellaneous notes and illustrations relating to vessels and steamboats. It is dated September 10, 1877 and was presented to the City of Oswego in the hope that someone would complete the work. The foreword has this interesting conclusion: "The work should not be added to indiscriminately without due regard to the truth of History, nor without the approval of the Mayor."

Mayor's Chair at the City Hall—

The Mayor's chair in the Common Council rooms at the City Hall was sent to Oswego from Mexico City at the time of the Mexican War. The inscription gives the story: "From the National Palace, in the City of Mexico. Presented by Lieut. John Porter Hatch, U. S. A., of the city of Oswego, to the Common Council, as a seat for the Mayor. October 20, 1848." Lieut. Hatch served in the Mexican War and was later Brig.-General. He was a son of Moses P. Hatch, an early Oswego settler.

Fence Around Boulder Marking Fort Oswego—

The fence around the boulder marking old Fort Oswego at West First and Van Buren Streets has an interesting story. Originally it was part of a fence enclosing one of the public buildings in Washington during Lincoln's administration. Then it was removed to Madison Barracks where it served a good many years. Finally being consigned to the junk heap, it was rescued by some Oswego citizens and placed around the boulder. The



OLD FORT ONTARIO

boulder came from the old cemetery at East Tenth and Bridge Streets, when the cemetery was made into a park.

Oswego Medal Commemorating Victory of Montcalm—

One of the prized possessions of the Oswego Historical Society is a medal struck off by King Louis XV of France to celebrate the victory of the French under Montcalm at Oswego in 1756. Three other victories at about the same time, in far-flung parts of the world, gave the French king his claim to universal dominion.

Alvin Bronson's Chair—

In the D. A. R. building, among other valuable materials belonging to the Historical Society, is a chair acquired from the Bronson family in which Alvin Bronson was hoisted to the English war vessel at the time he was taken prisoner in the attack on Oswego in 1814. At his liberation he requested the chair which was given him by the English officials.

Old Cemetery at Fort Ontario—

In a pretty little cemetery inside the military reservation may be found graves of soldiers from all the wars of our country. One is especially interesting, dating from the French and Indian War.

Fort Ontario—

Oswego has possessed a military post almost continuously from 1727 until the present day. In 1903 the old single company post known as Fort Ontario was enlarged into a battalion post which necessitated the erection of many new buildings and some extensive landscape gardening. The first American combat unit to land in France during the World War came from Fort Ontario. In 1918 it was converted temporarily into a huge hospital and many sick or wounded soldiers were brought there from the battle fields of France.



This monument to the memory of Oswego Civil War veterans was erected May 30, 1932 under the joint auspices of the Oswego Society of Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Association and the Elmina Spencer Tent Number 50, Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War.

In all the wars of this country, Oswego has had a vital part to play either in the use of its facilities or in the service of its people. In the half century of rivalry between the French and

English for possession of a continent, Oswego was "a hinge on which the fate of empire creaked." During the American Revolution, Oswego saw a red coated army from Canada file through to a decisive defeat at Oriskany. Later, in the same war, it became the last military objective of the Americans in their attacks on British forces in this country.

During the War of 1812, Oswego was again a theatre of war where some of its residents took an active part. Even in the so-called Patriot's War (1836), little mentioned in history books, the local scene furnished men and means for a foolhardy attempt to carry liberty to British subjects in Canada.

In the Mexican War (1846-48), Civil War (1861-65), and the Spanish-American War (1898), Oswego's sons marched to the support of the nation.

In the World War, about a thousand men from Oswego County answered the call to duty, some never to return.

PART TWO

A TOUR OF OSWEGO COUNTY

with

NOTES ABOUT ITS TOWNS

Leaving Oswego City, traveling east, we find ourselves at once in the town of Scriba. Only this small area commemorates the name of the man who bought the half million acres of land between Oneida Lake and Lake Ontario which now comprises the greater part of the county. Over this vast area dimly hovers the spirit of George Frederick Scriba, New York merchant, pioneer landholder, and builder.

When Fort Ontario was still held by the British after the Revolution, Scriba entered upon his gigantic venture to open up a wilderness and pave the way for an influx of settlers which came too late. It was in 1792 that he made the purchase. Two

years later his first settlement was built on Oneida Lake which he called "New Rotterdam," and which we know today as Constantia. His was the first grist mill in the county, situated near the mouth of the Scriba Creek. A trip to the Scriba home at Constantia makes an interesting tour, but for the present let us visit places close to Lake Ontario.

It was with considerable energy that Scriba pushed his activities on his new lands. His purpose was to open it for New England farmers who were now pouring into the fertile lands made accessible by the State after the Revolution. Scriba's next step was to make a settlement on his tract which opened on Lake Ontario. He then had a road cut across his lands all the way from New Rotterdam to the settlement on Lake Ontario. It was a crude road, four rods wide and filled with tree stumps, but it was one way of reaching the Great Lake. This was the first road in the county. The settlement on the lake was founded in 1796 and Scriba named it "Vera Cruz." With an opening on both Oneida Lake and Lake Ontario, and a road across his lands, Scriba felt sure that settlers would be attracted there. Let us stop for a short time at Scriba's "Vera Cruz."

Today we know "Vera Cruz" as Mexico Point. Situated at the mouth of Little Salmon Creek, Scriba's surveyor thought it had a great future, and immediately laid it off in city lots as far back as Texas. He built a store, a tavern, some log cabins, mills, and improved the entrance to the creek. For a few years the place promised a brilliant future, and efforts were made to make it one of the best harbors on the lake. Settlers did come to "Vera Cruz," a shipyard was built, and for a time it surpassed the meager settlement at Oswego in its activity.

Then a tragedy visited the infant "city" that seemed to lead to its decline. In the autumn of 1799, food became scarce, and two men volunteered to take a small schooner to Canada for a supply. When they failed to return after several days, others volunteered to go in search of them. They went in an open boat, and one was Nathaniel Rood, who is said to be the first settler in Mexico village. Their open boat encountered a terrific

gale, capsized, and they found a watery grave. While some business was transacted at the place, few new families came to continue the settlement and after a few years the war with England discouraged its mercantile activity.

The period from 1807 through the War of 1812 did witness the activities of smuggling at "Vera Cruz." As you recall it was the time when President Thomas Jefferson issued his embargo order prohibiting trade with the British. This of course also applied to New Yorkers, who had considerable business with Canada. When government soldiers were sent to Fort Ontario to intercept the potash trade with Canada, many of the farmers on Scriba's tract avoided the soldiers by sending their wood ashes over Scriba's road to "Vera Cruz," whence it found its way across the lake and to Montreal.

The region holds still another historical interest which time has nearly obliterated. At a very early date, probably about 1800, a man by the name of Silas Town came to what is now Mexico village, whence he soon removed to "Vera Cruz." He was a Revolutionary hero, serving as a spy in Canada and as one of George Washington's aides. Among the settlers at "Vera Cruz" he became a favorite. In 1806 he died and was buried on an island at the mouth of Little Salmon Creek. Today the island is known as Spy Island, or Grave Island, and on July 4, 1871, a monument was erected on the spot dedicated to his memory.

The disaster on the lake, and Jefferson's embargo followed by the War of 1812, wholly extinguished the flattering prospects of "Vera Cruz." A fire about 1820 destroyed the business portion, and this and the changes of over a century have obliterated all traces of the once promising "city." The town of Mexico, however, soon attracted farmers from Connecticut, some of whom came on sleds drawn by sturdy oxen. The records of the earliest settlers have been lost, but Reuben Hamilton and Nathaniel Rood seemed to have been among the first of whom records are found. The first school in the town was taught by Sanford Douglas at Colosse in 1806. The first school in Mexico village was held in a barn and was taught by Harriet Easton in 1811.

The interest of the people of Mexico in education is attested by the fact that as early as 1827, the town boasted of a Military Academy, which became known as Rensselaer Oswego Academy. In 1893 the name was changed to Mexico Military Academy. For a long time the Academy was well known in Central New York, both for its excellent teaching and its military department. Mexico is known as the "mother of towns" because it is the oldest political unit in the county and from it were formed several other towns. It is likely that Scriba or an agent of his named it after the country to the south of us. So perhaps is the origin of the name "Vera Cruz."

Following the shores of Lake Ontario we find other places of historic interest as we motor in the direction of Pulaski. This place, as you know, is named after Count Casimir Pulaski, of Polish birth, who rendered valuable aid to Washington and the American colonies during the Revolution. The place was settled as early as 1805 by families from Vermont. A settler had made his home in the town of Richland four years before this date, however, near the mouth of the Salmon River, in which area we now want to stop for a while. It can be reached by taking either the Selkirk or Port Ontario roads from Pulaski village. It was in this region, you recall, where the French Governor of Canada, La Barre, met the chiefs of the Iroquois for the peace council, when La Barre decided his small army was too sick to make an attack on the Iroquois villages. The French called the place La Famine in 1684, and at a later date the settlers named the river, Salmon, because of the abundance of that fish in its waters.

The lower part of the Salmon River was visited annually by families of the Oneida and Onondaga Indians to secure their winter supply of fish. This practice was continued long after white settlers came into the region. Often the Indian lodges were pitched along the river at favorable places for weeks and while the men caught and dried their catches, the woman engaged in the making of baskets.

At one time a great city was projected at Port Ontario. The government erected a lighthouse, which was afterward abandoned

but which is still standing. It is a picturesque place and worth a visit for its mute evidence of the ambitious plans of the past. The contemplated city was surveyed and plotted and streets were laid out on paper. In April of 1837, the Port Ontario Hydraulic Company was incorporated with a cash capital of \$100,000, its purpose being the construction of "a canal from the falls below Pulaski to the village of Port Ontario along the banks of the Salmon River." This was intended to supply Port Ontario with water power. In April of 1871, the Salmon River Improvement Company, capitalized at \$50,000, was formed to clear the river channel so that logs could be floated down. But a proposed government appropriation which gave life to the project of a city that was expected to rival Oswego never materialized, and today the place is the site of two small hamlets, separated by the river.

The site of the conference between the French and the Iroquois is but a stone's throw from the old light house.

Fascinating Lake Ontario may still deserve our attention as we follow its shore road into the town of Sandy Creek. Its name most certainly comes from the great deposits of sand along the broken shore line and streams. Early it belonged to the heirs of William Constable, pioneer land owner after whom Constableville is named. About 1803 the first white settlers arrived there by ox-sled from Oneida county, passing over the new state road through Redfield and Boylston.

The creek, after which the area is named, came into prominence during the War of 1812, when it offered a haven to the supply boats from Oswego to Sackets Harbor. You recall that in May 1814, Sir James Yeo seized Oswego for the purpose of capturing supplies destined for Sackets Harbor. Because the stores were at Fulton, (Oswego Falls) the British failed in their purpose. No sooner had they sailed away than the Americans set about to take the stores through. They were brought down the river and in large boats sent along the lake shore toward Sackets Harbor. But the British had not given up their quest. They had suspected the supplies would be brought through, and they lay in wait. They sighted the Americans and sailed to inter-

cept them. In great haste the Americans rowed their boats up into Big Sandy creek as far as they could and then unloaded the stores and prepared for battle.

In the meantime soldiers and some Oneida Indians had arrived from Sackets Harbor to help. The Americans took a position, and when the British arrived, gave them a hot reception. The British were taken by surprise. They had expected to take the stores without trouble. After a short time the battle was over and the British withdrew, unable to dislodge the Americans.

The stores were saved but it was necessary to get them to Sackets Harbor where they were to be used on the *Superior*, a great ship of war. Ox carts were procured and most of the stores were sent in that manner, but there was one big rope or cable that was so large no ox cart could carry it. This cable was part of the rigging of the *Superior*. How to convey it was a problem. Finally it was decided the men should carry it. So a hundred men lifted the huge rope to their shoulders and started the march to Sackets Harbor. It was a twenty-mile march. For two days the men walked bearing the heavy cable. In sight of Sackets Harbor, the soldiers and sailors came out to meet them, cheering. A drummer boy was lifted to the cable and beat his drum as the procession moved into the village. Today a splendid highway known as the Cable Trail follows the route of the march and along it are found artistic markers erected by the Daughters of 1812.

We should not leave Sandy Creek without telling the story of its big cheese. Back in 1835 one of its residents named Colonel Thomas S. Meacham determined that the area should be known for its dairying industry. His method was to make a gigantic cheese weighing 1400 pounds, which he designed as a present for President Andrew Jackson. When it was completed, the colonel decided to have it sent forth on its travels to Washington in grand style. So he obtained forty-eight gray horses, placed the cheese on a big wagon covered with flags, and started for Port Ontario. Farmers from all around led and followed the

monster cheese to the port where it was placed on a boat for shipment to Oswego. By way of the Oswego and Erie canals, it passed through Syracuse, Albany and New York on its way to Washington. At each place it received a great ovation.

It must have been a proud day for the colonel when the cheese was uncovered before the amazed Jackson. Old Hickory gave the colonel a return gift, had the cheese cut, and then invited all the people in Washington to come and eat cheese!

2. A drive to Oswego County hill country.

On a Sunday afternoon one will find the drive to Redfield pleasant. It may be reached by way of Pulaski and Orwell. In passing through Orwell we may recall that it was settled about 1806. Among the earliest settlers was Nathaniel Bennet and his son. It is after this family that Bennet Bridges derived its name. Today it is a community of people who run the power plant located there. From an early date Orwell was famous for its great Salmon River Falls which was a beauty spot of the county, and which now has been harnessed to produce electric power. People used to travel by train to Richland and thence by horses to the falls for the view. Its current, ten rods wide, rushed over the rocks for two miles and then dropped 107 feet into a deep pool, which abounded with salmon and trout. Orwell was named after a town in Vermont from which region some of its earliest settlers came. Its early industry was lumbering and tanning, and from its forests thousands of feet of timber were cut by the former Oswego City firm of Post & Henderson. Today the County Tuberculosis Sanatorium is located at Orwell village and serves the county in an efficient manner.

Passing through Orwell we enter Redfield. It was named after Frederick Redfield who bought a large tract of land there in early years. Though now one of the minor towns of Oswego county in population and business, the history of Redfield goes back into the late 1700's, when its territory was once one of the most promising of early settlements.

Redfield was the second town to be formed in what became Oswego county. That was in 1800. Its pioneers arrived earlier

than the first settlers in most of the other towns. It is thought the first arrived in 1794 or 1795, when there was not a settler at the site of Oswego City. The glowing accounts, sent back to their eastern friends of the fertile soil, pure water, and valuable timber, brought more people to the area. Most of the pioneers entered the region by way of Rome, through what is now Florence in Oneida county. At the time the road was a poor one, often almost impassable. After a few years the State became interested in improving communication between Rome and Sacketts Harbor and the "great road" was laid through Redfield.

During the War of 1812, the road through Redfield was of great benefit for the passage of troops to Sacketts Harbor. The going and coming of the soldiers afforded considerable excitement for the inhabitants of the "Square." On one occasion the captain of a company, encamped on the Square, invited the young ladies who were attending a quilting party nearby to come out and dance with his men. The ladies consented and there in the heart of the wilderness laughing couples tripped gaily to the sound of a violin.

Lumbering and tanning continued to form important industry for the area until the latter quarter of the past century. D. C. Littlejohn, one of the outstanding figures in Oswego City's history, constructed a saw mill in the northern part of the town and cut large quantities of timber that was floated down into the Salmon River. Today the forests and streams of Redfield still attract outdoor men, whose chief interest is the sport afforded, while its labor and industry of the past is remembered in the pages of history.

Turning south at Redfield Square we may follow a fine road into Williamstown. This town was also formed at an early date (1804) having been taken from the original Mexico as were Orwell and Redfield. Originally the land was a part of Scriba's purchase, and to it he gave the name of Franklin. But the early settlers who came in 1801 from Connecticut named it Williamstown after Henry Williams, one of their number. His was a

prominent part in the development of the region, and in 1826 he served as a member of the State Legislature.

As in most early towns, wild animal life in Williamstown was a source of much damage. As early as 1805, a bounty of \$25.00 was offered for the scalp of a wolf, but later the amount was reduced. A bounty, however, was given for wolves well up toward the middle of the century.

Williamstown was excellent timber region for many years. Much of its wood was used in the construction of railway ties and planks for the improved roads that came into existence about 1846. A plank road was built from Rome to Williamstown in 1847, which was extended to Oswego. One of the old stage coaches used on those strange roads may be seen today at Kasoag, where it is maintained as a relic of past days of travel.

As early as 1810, a saw mill existed at Kasoag which was the second in the town. In 1848 a great barrel factory was in operation there which turned out a thousand barrels a day. Many of these barrels went to Oswego and Syracuse where they were used in the packing of salt for shipment. Earlier Kasoag was the site of an old Indian camp, which was on the Indian trail from Oneida Castle to the Salmon River. It is said that Indian relics were discovered there by the inhabitants, and it is from the Indian source that the place derives its name. The drive through this region is a delightful one, and today Kasoag is a popular summer resort, visited by many people.

Journeying on to the next town we come to Amboy. For some time it was included in Williamstown, but in 1830 it was set off as a separate town. Its first settler, Joseph Perkins, came from Connecticut in 1805, but the settlement of the area was slow as compared with other towns. It was named in 1830, after the town of Amboy in New Jersey. In the northwestern corner of the town on Co-Anne Lake is located Camp Twelve Pines, the summer rendezvous of Oswego county scouts. In the lower part is Panther Lake, which is another wooded resort, popular with many people.

3. The Drive along Oneida Lake.

Passing on toward Oneida Lake we come into the town of Constantia and drive along the north shore of the lake to Constantia village, the old home of George Scriba.

As early as 1794, while the British still held Fort Ontario, Scriba founded Constantia to which he gave the name New Rotterdam. It was here that the first saw and grist mills in the county were constructed. For some time it was the only place where settlers on Scriba's patent could grind their wheat into flour.

Scriba, however, was not the first to own the land which now constitutes the town of Constantia. In 1791 it was acquired by John and Nicholas Roosevelt who purchased it from the State. It was from them, through a court action, that Scriba came into possession of the large tract between Oneida Lake and Lake Ontario. It was not until 1800 that Mr. Scriba himself established his residence at Rotterdam and built the old mansion which is still standing on the north side of the road just east of the creek. Up to that time, he conducted all his developmental activities on the tract through agents who represented him.

Of unusual interest as a part of this town is Frenchman's Island, which is located in the lake about four miles southwest from Constantia village. Around it has developed a tale which today is difficult to verify but which holds a peculiar romance for the visitor. It seems that a Frenchman by the name of Desvaines and his wife, "a daughter of the noble house of Clermont," came to this country to escape the upheavals in France. Suffering financial reverses in this country, he became disgusted with civilization and determined to find a home closer to nature in the wilderness. Selling most of their furniture, but retaining their library and some silver, the couple with two children started westward and reached Oneida Lake, then on the great thoroughfare of travel by water. This was in the spring of 1791. They settled on what has ever since been known as Frenchman's Island, where Desvaines began a clearing with his own hands.

This was the second settlement in Oswego county. Some question as to Desvatines' right on the land was raised by Roosevelt's agents, but Scriba invited him to live at Rotterdam which offer he seems to have gladly accepted. Soon after Chancellor Livingston learned of the Frenchman's hermitage, visited him, and prevailed upon him to return to Livingston's mansion upon the Hudson. When Napoleon ended the reign of terror and restored much of the confiscated property to the exiles of the revolution, the family returned to France.

Because of the hospitality offered Livingston by Madame Desvatines' family in France before the French Revolution, Livingston, who backed Robert Fulton's steamboat experiments, had the first successful steamboat named the "Clermont," in honor of her family. It is a name which every school pupil learns in his study of American history. To his estate on the Hudson, Livingston also had given this name.

Bernhard's Bay, a place four miles east of Rotterdam, was named after John Bernhard, Sr., who was the first permanent settler there. In 1826, a settler from Connecticut by the name of James Cleveland settled at the place which today bears his name.

Leaving Constantia, the town of West Monroe is crossed as Hastings is entered. This town has the distinction of having had the first permanent settler in the county. He was Oliver Stevens, who settled on the site of Brewerton in 1789, where he established a rude tavern for boatmen and where he traded with the Oneida Indians.

Before Stevens settled there, however, the site had been an important one during the French wars. Here was located one of the chain of forts built to protect the water trail from the Mohawk to Oswego. The fort was constructed by a Captain Brewerton, hence its name. In her book, "Memoirs of An American Lady," Mrs. MacVicar Grant describes her stay at Fort Brewerton on her way to Oswego with her soldier father. At that time part of the regiment which garrisoned Fort Ontario also were in command at Fort Brewerton.

What we know today as the Watertown road from Syracuse was called in former days the old Salt Road. This road will always be significant in American history as the first plank road ever to have been built in the country. It connected Syracuse with Central Square and was built in 1846. Where this road crossed the Fulton road, the settlement of Central Square began. A Chester Loomis built a tavern there about 1815. In 1820, N. I. Roosevelt occupied it as a dwelling.

Coughdenoy was settled as early as 1797. Near here is to be seen a large boulder with several rounded depressions said to have been used by the Oneida Indians to grind corn.

Just to the northwest of Hastings is located the town of Palermo, known in the Scriba patent as Mentz. Its first permanent settler was David Jennings, who came there from Oneida in 1806. His was the first log house in the town. On the road between Mexico and Fulton, the little settlement was known as Jennings's Corners, which later became Palermo Center.

4. The Beautiful Oswego River Drive—East.

By many the drive up the east side road along the Oswego River is considered one of the most beautiful in the state. Its sloping timbered banks are still free of the clusters of summer cabins seen so frequently along most New York waterways. Along this stretch of now placid water, paddled the canoes of red men and Jesuit fathers. These waters carried the soldiers of the French and Indian wars, as well as of the Revolutionary war. After the canoe came the bateau; after the bateau, the Durham boat and raft; and after the Durham boat, the canal boat. To James Fenimore Cooper goes the credit for having given to the world the picture of our famous river as he described it in his romance "Pathfinder," one of his famous Leatherstocking Tales.

Ascending Seneca Hill driving up the river, we leave Scriba town to enter Volney. As we go up this steep hill, used early as an Indian lookout along the river, we are reminded that in the

milling days of the 1860's, one of the largest flour mills in the world was located here. Today little evidence of it remains, but the dusty pages of gazetteers bear evidence of its existence.

The name Volney was not the original name of this town. As a part of the Scriba purchase it was named Fredericksburgh, in honor of Scriba's son, Frederick William. In 1811 the name Volney was given after the celebrated French philosopher of that name who visited the locality in 1808.

The second city of the county, Fulton, is located in Volney. Known at first as Oswego Falls, the name Fulton was designated in 1826 after the inventor of the steamboat, Robert Fulton. During the days of the French and Indian wars, a fort resembling the one at Brewerton was constructed at the falls to guard the water route. It is said to have had a garrison of a hundred men. A large blockhouse also overlooked Three River Point as a part of the chain of fortifications.

The first permanent settler in the town was Daniel Masters, who located at the "Upper Landing" in 1793, while the second settler, a Major Lawrence Van Valkenburgh, located about two miles below the present Fulton in 1795. He opened a tavern here which became a familiar stopping place for boatmen hauling salt from Salt Point to Oswego.

Fulton developed out of what early was known as the "Upper Landing" and the "Lower Landing," which marked the head and foot of the "carry" around the falls. The two landings were about a mile apart, and the intervening stretch of water, flowing over an uneven rocky bottom, was the "portage of Oswego Falls." In ancient Indian legends mention of these falls are found. Canoes and similar craft were frequently piloted through it, a feat usually performed by Indians and immortalized in Cooper's "Pathfinder." DeWitt Clinton, journeying to Oswego in 1810 by way of the water trail, wrote about the great quantities of salt that were piled at each landing on its way down the river. It was here that the supplies were hidden when Admiral Yeo made his attack on Fort Ontario in 1814.

The business of the village was confined largely to the

Upper and Lower Landings, until the year 1825, when a canal was built around the rapid. Thereafter the location of the present village proper attracted the attention of business men, one of whom was Lewis Falley, a first merchant of the place. It was after him that the splendid old Fulton seminary received its name. The completion of the canal ushered in an important era in the history of Fulton.

Driving out of Volney, the town of Schroepfel is entered. Its name is derived from George Casper Schroepfel, early landholder and friend of Scriba. The title to a large section of this town soon passed to Ezra L'Hommedieu who sold part of it to Alexander Phoenix from whom the village of Phoenix receives its name.

The town's first settler was "bear hunter" Abram Paddock who arrived in 1801. His hunting and trapping activities caused no little concern to the Indians who enjoyed the fishing and hunting near the rifts which formerly lay off the present village of Phoenix in the Oswego River. It was not until 1827 that the first saw mill was built in Phoenix, and the following year its first store was opened. At Three Rivers Point the first school in Schroepfel was opened in 1813. It was taught by Horatio Sweet.

Pennellville was named after Dr. Richard Pennell of New York, whose wife was a daughter of George Schroepfel. Hinmansville was named for John E. Hinman of Utica who founded the village in 1827. His wife was one of the Schroepfel heirs. In a quiet grove of trees at Hinmansville may be seen today one of the few remaining lock basins of the old Oswego canal.

5. The Drive Along the West Side of the Oswego River.

The towns on the west side of the river constituted a part of the so-called "military tract" which was granted to New York State soldiers who served in the Revolution in lieu of pay. All titles on these lands are derived through patents from the State to these officers and soldiers. Immediately upon leaving the city limits of Oswego, the military tract is entered. We know it as the town of Oswego. The first settler in the town was Asa Rice,

who came from Connecticut in 1797. Trading his land in the east with an old soldier for his military lot three miles west of Oswego, Rice decided to build his home in the wilderness upon the shores of Lake Ontario. He settled in what we know as Fruit Valley, but which he christened Union Village. In 1795 while the British were still in possession of Oswego and when there was no settlement on the west side of the river, Rice came to visit his land. Two years later he brought his family. The experiences related herewith seem so typical of settlers coming to this area that they are included exactly as told by Asa's son, also of the same name, who was eleven years old when Rice brought his family to their new home.

"The first day we reached the boat on the Mohawk and the next day moved up the river, where we found a large number of Irishmen digging a canal across from the Mohawk to Wood Creek, a distance of two miles. We passed the carrying place* and entered Wood Creek, two other boats being in our company. We were three days in reaching Oneida Lake, the water being low in some places, and all hands dragging the boats, one after another, over the shoals. My brother Heman, then two years old, fell overboard. He had on a red dress and we could see him in the water so soon got him out. Where Wood Creek empties into Oneida Lake, the boat struck a log and I fell into the water and was helped out by my father.

"We reached the lake at evening and at 2 A. M. reached Rotterdam, now Constantia. The next day we reached Three River Point, where lived Esq. Bingham, who professed to be a pilot. The next morning he took charge of our boat to conduct it down Three River Rift, opposite the present village of Phoenix. In going down the boat struck a rock in the middle of the river and whirled around across the stream, the bottom upon the rock. The upper side sank and the boat filled with water, washing off many light articles which were never recovered. All the goods were thoroughly drenched except the upper drawer of the bureau in which were the writings. The family fortunately were placed upon the shore previous to reaching the rift, and

* At Rome.

stayed in a fisherman's camp opposite the boat for three or four days, through a tremendous northwest storm. After the storm a lightboat came along and helped get our things out and our boat righted. We then came down the river, and at Oswego Falls found a carrying place of about a mile, thence down the river to the lake and along the shore to father's lot. It was on October 6, 1797, at about two P. M. when we arrived at Four Mile Creek, and father said, "This is our land," and turned the boat toward the shore. I got to the bow and when the boat touched the shore I jumped and said, 'I'll be the first to take possession.'

"The goods were taken out upon the beach and the boatmen went back. It was a beautiful day and the first business was to open the goods and spread them out to dry. Not a bush had been cut toward a clearing, but father had borrowed at the garrison in Oswego a tent, 7x10 feet, which he raised for a temporary shelter a few rods back from the beach.

"Toward night the wind blew hard off the lake and it began to lightning and thunder. A little after sundown it rained and stormed very hard, while we, a family of ten, crept into the little tent and stayed all night. The next day father went back about thirty rods from the shore and cut some logs and made a pen, 7x10 feet, and placed the tent on top and put some boards or pieces of boats he found on the lake shore across, making a chamber for the boys. Soon afterward we built, of poles twelve feet long, a pen about six feet high and made a roof by putting hemlock boughs on the rafters, and the family moved into it. About that time Mother and one of the children were taken sick with fever and ague. The boatmen, who left us the day we landed, were to have returned in three weeks with provisions for the winter, but did not return for six weeks. We had a little bag of flour, about twenty pounds, and father caught a salmon and took another one from an eagle. That was all the provisions we had. Father went to Oswego and bought for six dollars a barrel of flour, which had been under water and was wet and moldy; no light bread could be made of it and it made the children sick when they ate it. When the boatmen returned, prob-

ably about November 20, they helped father build a log house, 16x18 feet, covered with basswood bark, about one hundred rods back from the lake, and then the family moved in drawing our sick mother upon a sled as winter had already set in. After we had moved in the boatmen said we must name the village, and they drank wine and named it "Union Village." In February 1798, my brother Horace died, aged about one and a half years. During the winter my brother Joseph, aged fourteen years, and myself cleared about four acres. In the spring some corn and potatoes were planted and a pair of oxen and a heifer were brought from Whitestown. Once during the summer the cattle strayed away and were gone some three weeks.

"During the first winter but one family remained at Oswego. A man by the name of Hudson lived up the river about a mile and hunted during the winter. From Oswego west to Big Sodus Bay, thence south to the Seneca River and down the river to Three River Point and thence to Oswego, there were only two or three families and they were at the Point and the Falls.

"In the fall of 1798, the children were all taken sick with lake fever and father, who was of feeble constitution, was sick for three months. In 1799, the family were well and some progress was made in clearing. For two years we pounded corn in a maple log for our bread and pudding. In 1800, the family were all sick again. About this time the bears began to trouble us by catching calves and pigs. We also suffered for lack of clothing and the ticking of our beds and pillows was cut up, the feathers being emptied into barrels and boxes. Wild game and fish were then plentiful and we began taking grain to the mill to be ground, sometimes to Sodus Point or to Ellisburg, in Jefferson County, and once to Oswegatchie, now Ogdensburg. Once father and mother and one child started to go to Oswego in a log canoe and there being a south wind hoisted a sail. When they were about half a mile out the wind shifted and the canoe was turned bottom upwards. They got upon the canoe and a boat went after them, so they arrived safely at home.

"In 1798, the townships of Hannibal, Lysander and Scipio were organized into one town, and Asa Rice, my father, was supervisor. He reported fifteen inhabitants and the valuation of taxable property at \$1500. He continued supervisor until 1806. The first marriage in the town was of Augustus Ford and my sister, Damaris Rice, in the year 1800."*

On the hill overlooking Fruit Valley, commonly known as Perry Hill, stands the Perry home said to have been built about the year 1814. Eleazer Perry settled in this general location in 1805.

The first school in Oswego town was built of logs at Fruit Valley in 1813, on the site of the old cobblestone school still standing today but unused. It was taught by Susan Newell. A saw mill was constructed by Messrs. Rice and Brace in 1811. A grist mill was also built on the creek in 1813. Mrs. Rice and her daughter did the weaving for the people of this locality.

Turning back to the Oswego River and following the west river road out of the city we are reminded that this was the first road in the town through to Minetto and Fulton. It was surveyed in 1811.

Of historical significance in the town of Granby is Battle Island Park located along the Oswego River below Fulton. Through the foresight and generosity of Mr. Frederick A. Emerick, of Oswego, two hundred acres of this historic area have been dedicated forever to the people as a public park and scenic reservation.

The event associated with the area took place in the French and Indian War. In the spring of 1756, the French turned their attention to the destruction of the English post at Oswego. Not yet ready to attack the post itself, they planned to harass the means of communication between Oswego and Albany, the main base of supply for Oswego. This line of communication was, of

* This information is furnished by Mr. Asa Pease, of Fruit Valley, a descendant of Asa Rice.

course, the Oswego River, Oneida River, Wood Creek, and the Mohawk River.

One of the first blows struck at the line took place in March of the year 1756, when the French and their Indian allies destroyed Fort Bull, a blockhouse which guarded the carrying place at Rome. The movement caused great concern on the part of the English who eventually sent much needed provisions and reinforcements to Oswego. Colonel Bradstreet by July reached Oswego with a fleet of 600 bateaux, bringing several large guns, large quantities of stores and provisions and about 200 men to strengthen the garrison.

With the goods safely stored at Oswego, Bradstreet immediately began the return trip to Albany having arranged his empty bateaux in three divisions. The voyage up the river was difficult with the clumsy boats, for the current was strong and the rifts and shoals frequent. News of the supply train to Oswego had reached the French, but by the time they were within striking distance Bradstreet had delivered his supplies and was on his return trip to Albany. The French, however, decided that the capture of the empty fleet would hurt the morale of the English as it indeed would.

On the afternoon of July 3, Bradstreet's men were poling their foremost boats near an island in the Oswego River when a volley of musket fire from the east side surprised them. About 700 of the enemy, of which 200 were French regulars and the rest Canadians and Indians, had laid in ambush awaiting the returning bateaux. Bradstreet, though taken by surprise, executed a brilliant move. With only a few men he proceeded to the island facing the French in order to keep them from fording the river until the rest of his men could land on the west side. Seeing his advantage in holding the island, a party of 40 Frenchmen began another attack upon Bradstreet. Reinforced by a few men, the English succeeded in preventing the enemy from approaching the island. Determined now to have the island, the French sent a party of 70 from their position on the east side. Spread out along the bit of land and sheltered by

its trees, the English again succeeded in repulsing the attack.

By this time the other divisions of boatmen had come up and landed on the west side of the river. Bradstreet having accomplished his purpose of holding the island until his men came up, and perceiving the enemy were now intent upon surrounding him with their whole strength, retired to the west bank of the river followed by the French. The English commander's next move was to feint a retreat. He ordered his men to fall back in order to permit all of the enemy to ford the river and give pursuit. Then he gave the order to turn upon the French. Baffled by the sudden tactics of the English, the enemy faced about, started back to the river, and soon were in a complete rout. Many were killed as they forded the river again and the rest took to their heels. So close was the pursuit that the French left behind all their packs, blankets and provisions, and many of their guns. Colonel Bradstreet's right-hand man in this expedition was Captain Philip Schuyler, of one of the oldest families of Albany, who afterwards became the celebrated Major General of the Revolutionary Army.

Reaching Albany about a week later, Bradstreet strongly urged that reinforcements be sent to Oswego. In this advice he was joined by Sir William Johnson, who was doing so much to keep the friendship of the Iroquois for the English. Higher army officials, however, were more interested in fortifying Albany. The result was that within a month the French were before the Oswego forts in large numbers, and on August 14, 1756, Oswego surrendered to General Montcalm.

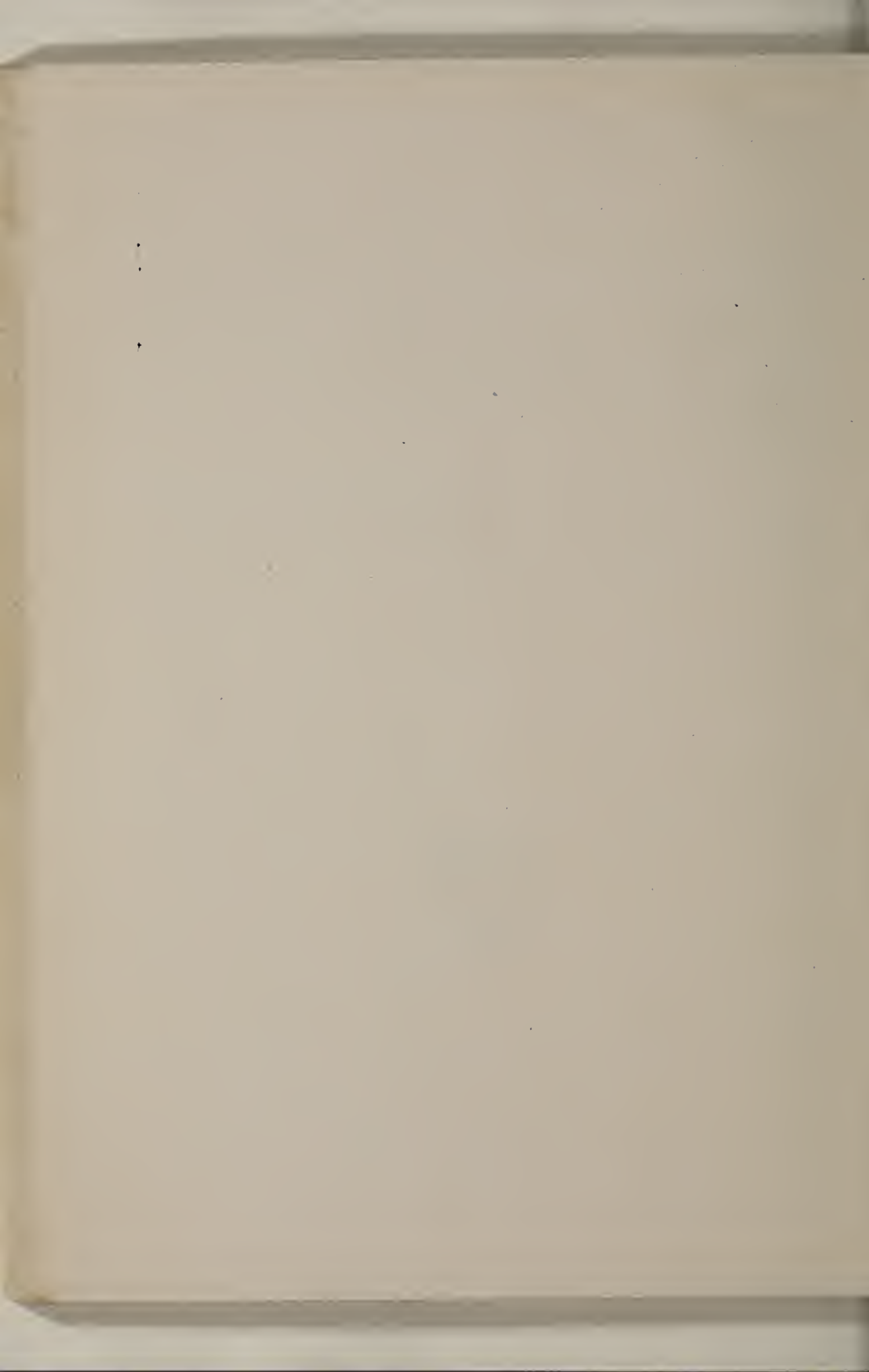
Swinging over to the town of Hannibal, we find that the name is derived from the great Carthaginian general of ancient times. The place was first settled in 1802 by Thomas Sprague, a pioneer from Massachusetts. Within a few years more settlers came into the military tract, and by 1813 a crude road had been constructed to Oswego. As early as 1810 Hannibal boasted of a school, and today it can be proud of the fact that it has on file school records dating back to April 13, 1813.

By 1830, the village assumed fair proportions and when

stage lines began running from Oswego to Auburn, Hannibal was one of the stations on it. Every morning a "coach and four" left Oswego for Rochester, and Rochester for Oswego, each changing horses at Hannibal. Of interest at Hannibal are the two old trees now indicated by a state marker which is located just around the corner on turning into the concrete highway leading to Red Creek. On the tree trunks may still be seen the original blazes in the bark which marked the early trail between Oswego and Auburn.

To reach these towns in Oswego county is now a simple matter. The above sketches are written with the hope that persons interested in touring through the county may find them informative and significant.





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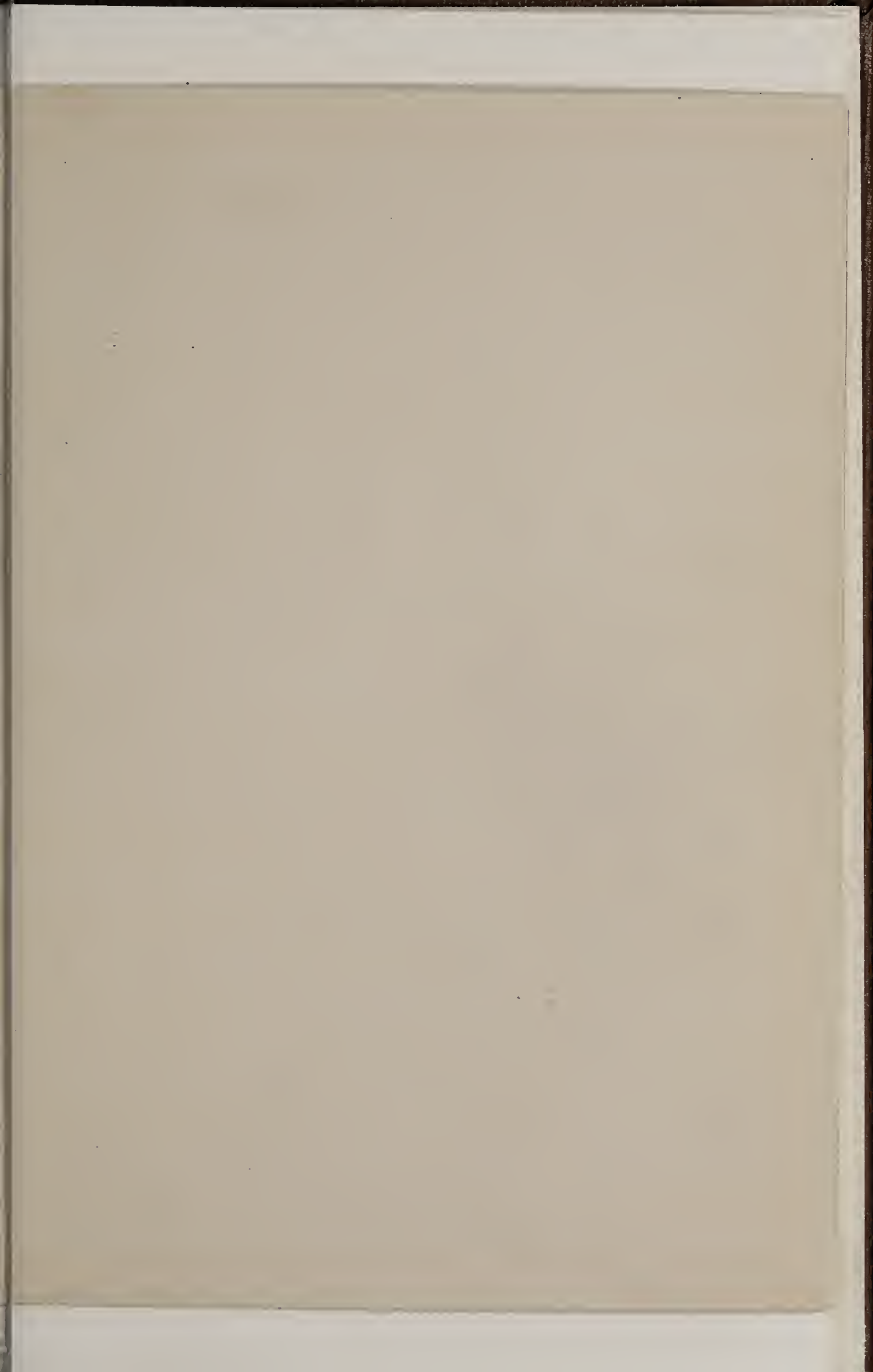
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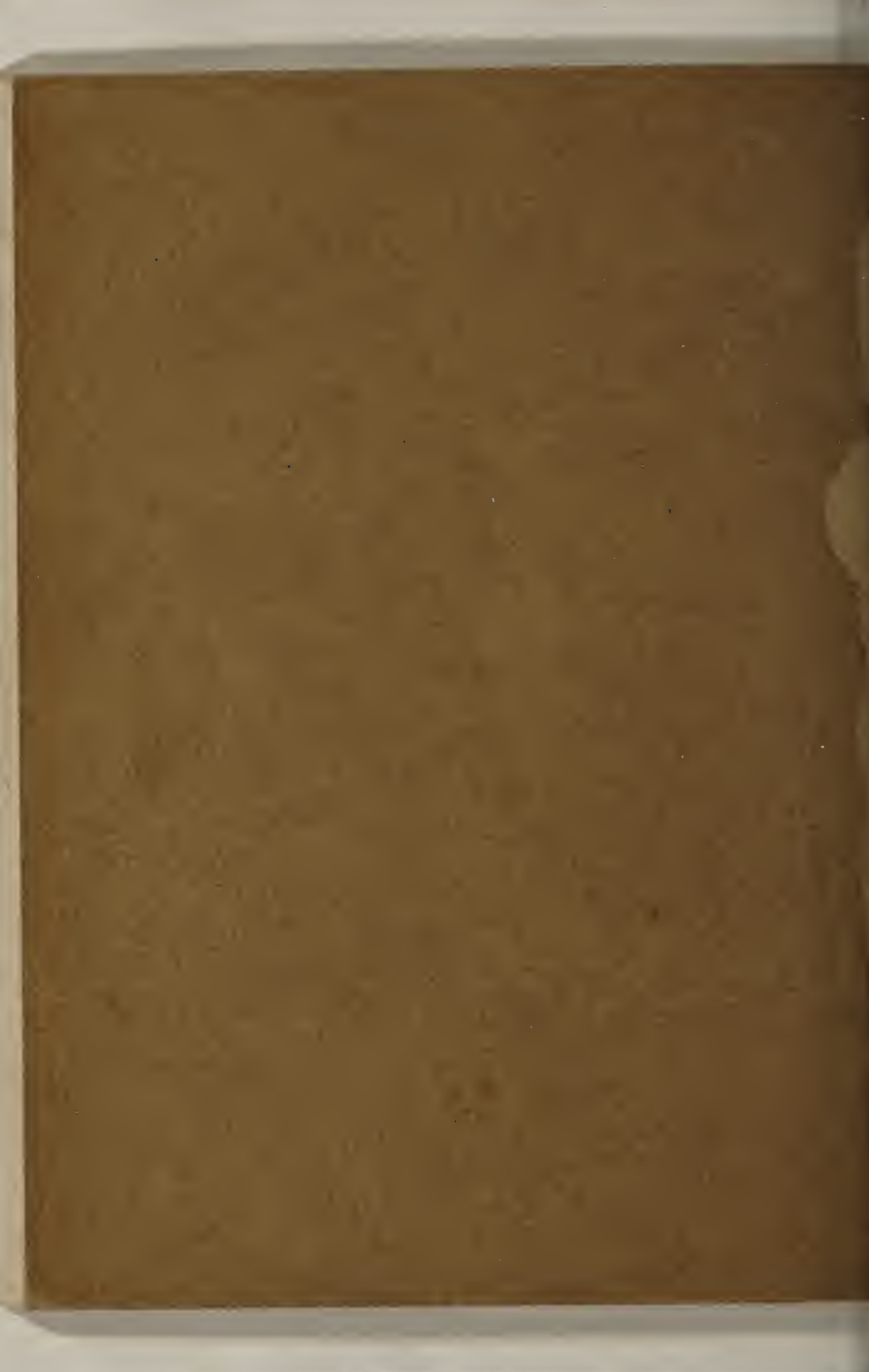
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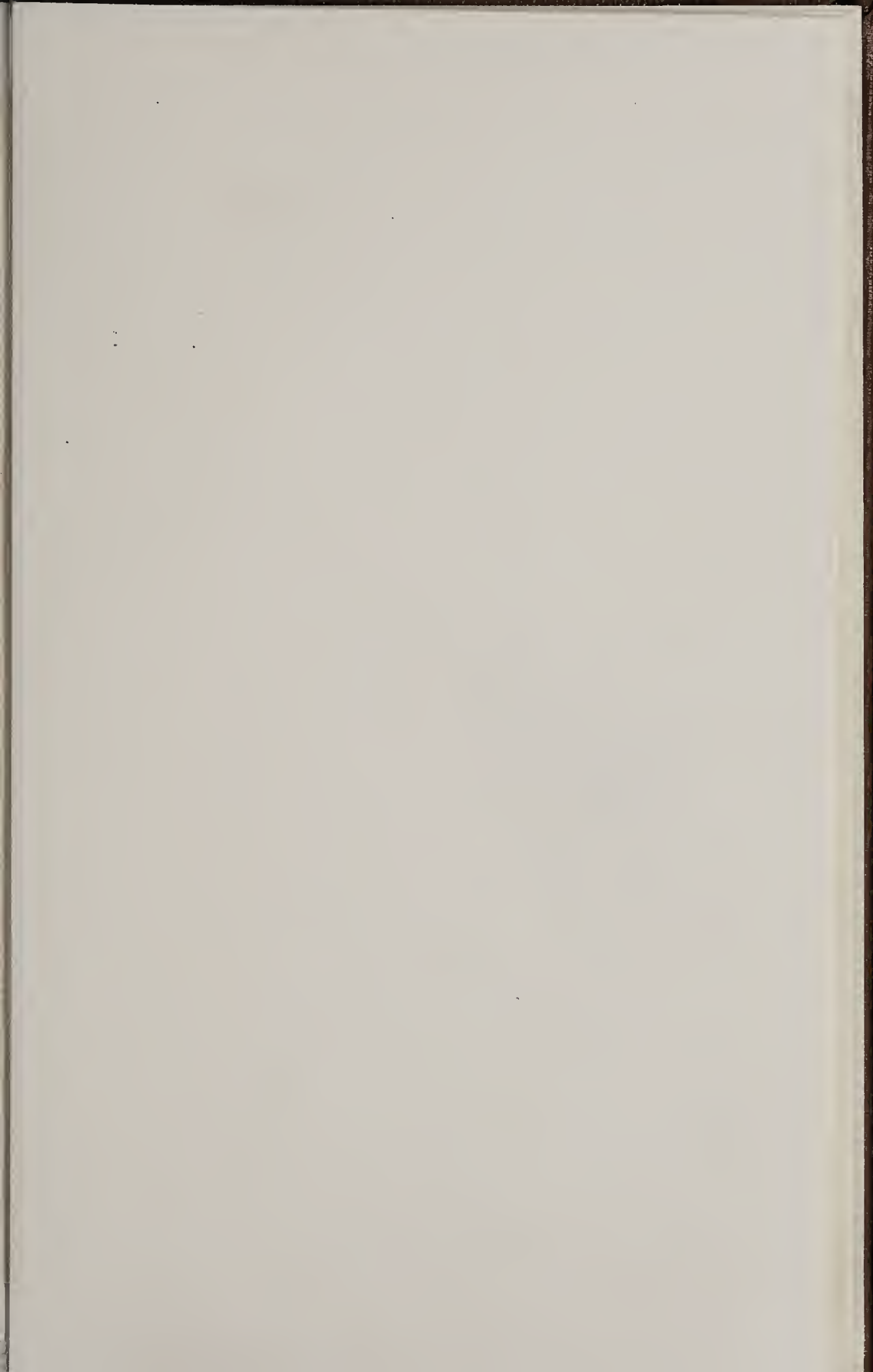
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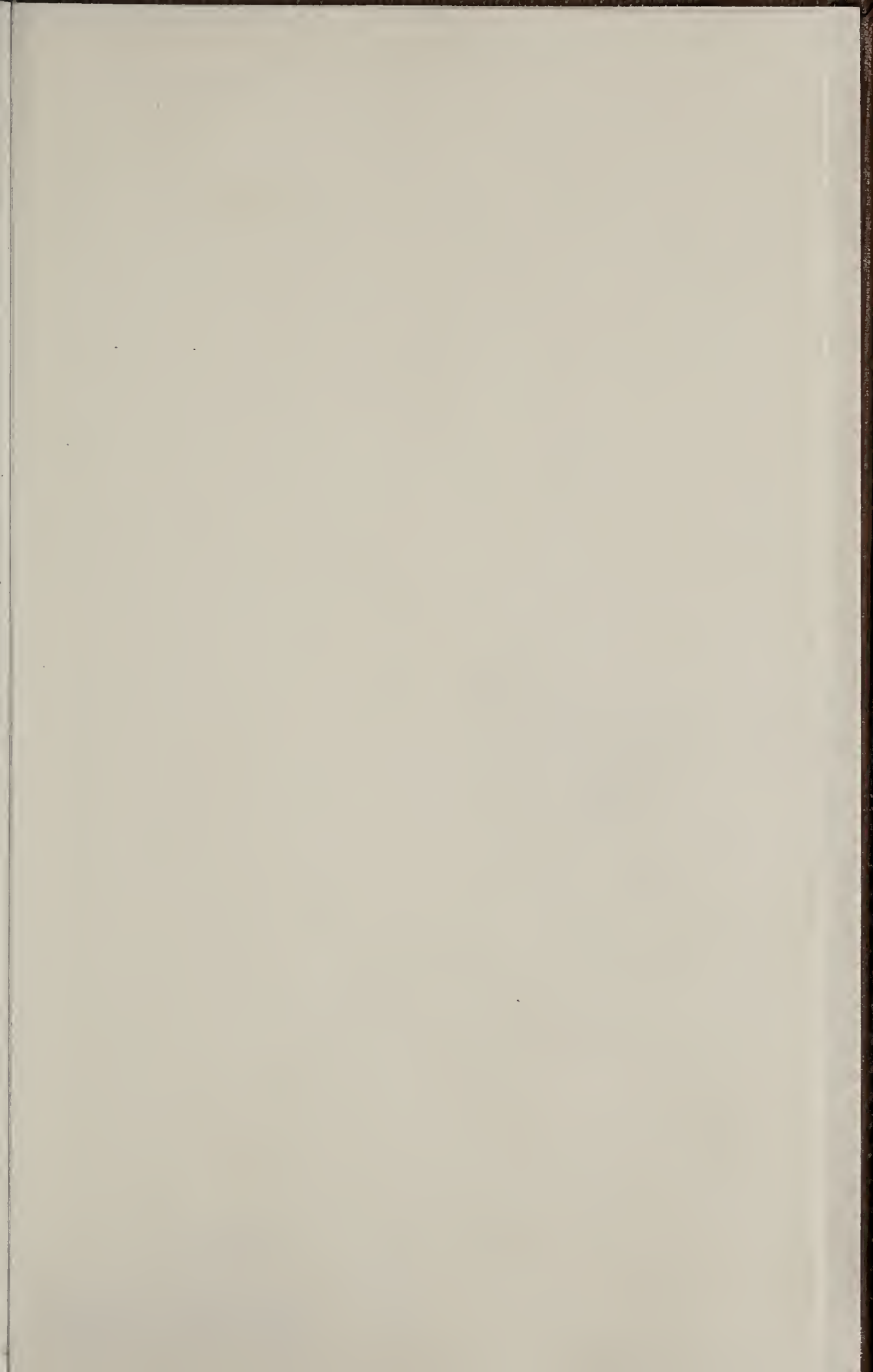












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